

**ANGUS COUNCIL**

**SCRUTINY AND AUDIT COMMITTEE – 1 DECEMBER 2020**

**SCRUTINY REVIEW PARKING CHARGES ACTION PLAN FOLLOW-UP**

**REPORT BY CATHIE WYLLIE – SERVICE LEADER (INTERNAL AUDIT)**

**ABSTRACT**

This report provides the follow-up agreed in November 2019 in response to the Scrutiny and Audit committee's Scrutiny Panel review of parking charges. Report 384/19 refers.

**1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

1.1 It is recommended that the Scrutiny and Audit Committee:

- (i) Note the follow-up position,
- (ii) Identify any areas where further information or action is required, and
- (iii) Decide if further follow-up reporting is required, and if so, when.

**2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS LOCAL OUTCOMES IMPROVEMENT PLAN (LOIP) AND COUNCIL PLAN**

2.1 The contents of this report contribute to the achievement of the corporate priorities set out in the Angus Local Outcomes Improvement Plan and the Council Plan. This is achieved through this report providing the Scrutiny & Audit Committee with information and assurance about council internal control systems, governance and risk management.

**3. BACKGROUND**

3.1 At its meeting on 20 November 2018, the Scrutiny & Audit Committee agreed to undertake a scrutiny review to examine the process that had been undertaken to reach the decision to introduce car parking charges (see para 18 below). The review covered processes in the period between agreeing the 2018/19 budget and implementing parking charges on 1 November 2018. The members who participated in the scrutiny panel were:

- Cllr Bill Duff (Chair)
- Cllr Brian Boyd
- Cllr Colin Brown
- Cllr Lynne Devine
- Cllr Ian McLaren

3.2 At the initial meeting of the panel, the members agreed the purpose and objectives for the review: 1. Review the key processes undertaken in deciding to introduce parking charges 2. Highlight good practice 3. Identify key issues and learning points to inform future decision making.

3.3 A series of meetings with officers and senior administration elected members took place between February and April 2019. CLT members considered the draft report and populated the action plan prior to the final report coming to the Scrutiny and Audit committee in November 2019, and Council in December 2019.

#### 4. CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 The following table summarises the Council's position to date in relation to the actions recommended in report 384/19. It should be noted that the nature of several of these actions is more about learning points for individual's future actions on an on-going basis rather than specific one-off actions. For that reason, some actions have been assessed as complete, although ongoing action should be taken by members and directors going forward.
- 4.2 The follow-up audit identified a number of separate but related activities underway across the council. These have been identified for information in the table below and a recommendation made so that members can decide if they want to see further information relating to these at a future Scrutiny and Audit meeting.

Four actions are complete with further related actions in progress in relation to two.

One action is well progressed, with completion planned for February 2021.

One action has been superseded by actions in the change governance action plan.

In undertaking this follow-up we identified that although the actions were input to Pentana they were not assigned to owners which meant no alerts or reminders have been issued during 2020. This, coupled with Directors and senior staff being heavily involved with our response to Covid 19, has meant some actions were not completed in the originally identified timeframe. Use of Pentana has been steadily embedded into everyday use throughout 2020 and this issue should not arise again in future.

Recommendation	Agreed Action	Owner and timeframe	Follow-up position October 2020 (Highlighted items to be confirmed/updated)
<p>1. Committee reports should contain more detailed option appraisal information, to allow informed discussion and challenge by all elected members. Where decisions are taken outwith the committee cycle, a summary of the options considered and justification for those decisions, should be included in committee reports.</p>	<p>Officers will review current practice in line with Audit Scotland's Report "How councils work: an improvement series for councillors and officers - Options appraisal: are you getting it right?"</p>	<p>Directors Immediate</p>	<p>A review of committee reports from October 2019 to date shows options appraisals, with reasons for the one recommended, including in order to achieve best value, are presented to members.</p> <p>Use of options appraisals during the OD/ZBB service reviews throughout 2018/19 demonstrates widespread use and understanding of options appraisals within services.</p> <p>Options appraisal is part of planned improvements to project management. The planned work aims to ensure options appraisal is embedded into routine practice and will review standardisation of approach and provide supporting guidance/templates, including covering who</p>

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			<p>should be consulted and the authorisation process. This review will take the Audit Scotland report into consideration. This is in an action plan, with a delivery date of 31 December 2020. CLT will be updated on this.</p> <p>The Governance MOG has review of the committee report template as part of the scope of the review. Officers have confirmed this guidance will be considered as part of the review. Completion date TBC</p> <p><b>Action complete</b>, with further related actions in progress for project management and Governance MOG</p>
<p>2. There is scope for more rigorous challenge by all elected members. The inclusion of better option appraisal detail in committee reports (rec 1) would assist, but elected members should consider whether there is a need for additional support or training and when the use of MOGs would be most beneficial.</p>	<p>Elected members should consider these comments and discuss with officers where necessary.</p>	<p>All elected members  Immediate</p>	<p>Report 384/19, including the action plan, was reported to Scrutiny and Audit in November 2019, and full Council in December 2019 so all elected members should be aware of this action.</p> <p><b>Action complete</b></p>
<p>3. At Council and committee meetings, any formal amendment that is ruled non competent can already be minuted at the request of the mover. Members may wish to use this option in future debates. This would demonstrate to the public that their elected members are actively challenging reports and raising issues of concern.</p>	<p>Elected members should note the option to request at meetings that amendments ruled non competent are minuted.</p>	<p>All elected members  Immediate</p>	<p>Report 384/19, including the action plan, was reported to Scrutiny and Audit in November 2019, and full Council in December 2019 so all elected members should be aware of this action.</p> <p>This option has not been requested up to the date of preparing this report in mid-September 2020 but is available under current Standing Orders.</p> <p><b>Action complete</b></p>

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<p>4. Public consultation exercises should include consultation on all options / issues which are likely to impact significantly on the public.</p>	<p>Consultation exercises will seek to include options that may have significant impact on the public to gain an understanding of potential responses and expectations of what may need to be managed</p>	<p>Directors  Immediate</p>	<p>As noted this learning point was communicated to and accepted by all Directors for implementing at the time the scrutiny report was finalised. All consultation exercises are unique, and Directors consider the issues to be consulted on to suit the circumstances of each consultation. These are undertaken in line with the national standards for community engagement and any specific legislation that applies.</p> <p>A draft paper on community engagement is being prepared for CLT consideration, with further action, including possible production of an Engagement Strategy to be determined. Appropriate engagement would help ensure that all relevant issues and options are identified in any subsequent consultation. Presentation to CLT planned for 24 November 2020.</p> <p><b>Action Complete</b>, with further action relating to engagement planned by CLT</p>
<p>5. There is scope for further discussion to clarify what is operational (officer preserve) and what is strategic (elected member preserve). Guidance should be developed to clarify the extent to which elected members can raise concerns about operational changes, particularly changes that are likely to affect large numbers of people.</p>	<p>A report outlining the key principle and recommendations of Audit Scotland's Report "How councils work - Roles and working relationships in councils: are you still getting it right?" and the previous report "How councils work: an improvement series for councillors and officers - Roles and working relationships: are you getting it right?" will be prepared for</p>	<p>Director of Legal &amp; Democratic Services  Initial target date For February 2020 meeting  Revised date February 2021</p>	<p>Training for elected members on the Councillors' Code of Conduct, including reference to the Standards Commission for Scotland <a href="#">Advice Note</a> for Councillors on distinguishing between their strategic role and any operational work was delivered in May 2019.</p> <p>Completion of this action has been delayed due in part to the issues indicated above with the Pentana system. Covid-19 is now</p>

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	consideration by Council. This will include recommendations and address future training options.		<p>impacting due to competing priorities for the Legal &amp; Democratic team.</p> <p>Report planned for Council in February 2021</p> <p><b>Action in progress and on track to be complete in February 2021</b></p>
6. Post implementation reviews should be carried out regularly and the results shared across the council, to ensure that lessons identified (both things well done and mistakes made) can inform future projects.	Officers undertake periodic reviews of operational aspects of the council's functions to seek continuous improvement and share transferable learning	<p>Directors</p> <p>On-going</p> <p>Change Governance actions taking this further are allocated to Service Leader - Governance</p>	<p>Implementation of this is to some extent informal within services. Discussion takes place at officers' Leadership Forum to share experience from time to time, and Internal Audit undertake post implementation reviews of new system implementation. "End of Project" reports for Change Programme projects should also include lessons identified.</p> <p>It is recognised that this should be made more formal within the project management guidance and that the sharing of information can be further improved. The Change Programme governance action plan includes Project Management actions that will address this.</p> <p>This action has therefore been assessed as <b>Action closed - superseded by other active actions.</b></p>

## 5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

**NOTE:** The following background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.  
Report 384/19

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