

ANGUS COUNCIL

MINUTE of MEETING of the **SCRUTINY AND AUDIT COMMITTEE** held remotely on Tuesday 26 January 2021 at 2.00pm.

Present: Councillors ALEX KING, BILL DUFF, JULIE BELL, BRIAN BOYD, COLIN BROWN BEM, LYNNE DEVINE, BEN LAWRIE, MARK MCDONALD, IAN McLAREN, BOB MYLES, MARK SALMOND and BETH WHITESIDE.

Councillor KING, Convener, in the Chair.

1. APOLOGIES/SUBSTITUTES

There were no apologies submitted.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

3. MINUTES

(a) Previous Meeting

The minute of meeting of this Committee of 1 December 2020 was approved as a correct record and signed by the Convener.

With reference to Article 6 therein, Councillor Bell requested an update in relation to the information requested in terms of food waste. The Clerk intimated that she would seek to have the information circulated as soon as possible.

(b) Special Meeting

The minute of Special meeting of this Committee of 24 November 2020 was approved as a correct record and signed by the Convener.

4. ANGUS ADULT PROTECTION COMMITTEE BIENNIAL REPORT 2018 TO 2020

With reference to Article 7 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 22 January 2019, there was submitted Report No 9/21 by the Chief Executive and Chair of Angus Chief Officer's Group presenting the Angus Adult Protection Committee Biennial Report for 2018 to 2020, which had been approved by the Angus Adult Protection Committee and the Angus Chief Officer's Group.

The Report indicated that it had been a busy period for the Angus Adult Protection Committee with a number of priority areas identified for development over the next two years, as detailed within the Strategic Plan for 2020-2023. The plan had identified areas for future development as well as monitoring and oversight of ongoing work. The plan would also be regularly updated to include any new national or local priorities that had been identified and would also be updated to include actions related to the recent adult protection inspections. The new plan remained flexible to take into account any impact from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Councillor Kenny Braes joined the meeting at this point (2.25pm).

Mr Ewen West, Independent Chair of the Angus Adult Protection Committee, provided a detailed overview of the Report and thereafter the Committee heard from the Chief Executive in relation to development needs, in particular multi-agency chronologies, risk assessments and transitions.

Mr West then answered questions from Councillors Lawrie, Bell, Whiteside, Myles and Devine in relation to delivery of the action plan, transitional work and further steps identified, referrals from the general public and the 'See Something Hear Something' campaign, the number of referrals from agencies, the lack of attendance from GPs and Psychiatry Services, the impact of Covid-19, and Care Inspectorate inspections.

The Director of Children, Families and Justice also confirmed the position with regard to Care Inspectorate inspections.

Thereafter, the Committee, having welcomed the Report and the work of the Angus Adult Protection Committee, agreed to note the contents of the Angus Adult Protection Committee Biennial Report 2018 to 2020, attached as an Appendix to the Report.

5. INTERNAL AUDIT ACTIVITY UPDATE

With reference to Article 7 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 1 December 2020, there was submitted Report No 10/21 by the Service Leader - Internal Audit providing the Internal Audit Activity update on the main findings of the Internal Audit Report issued since the date of the last meeting.

The Report presented the progress with the Internal Audit activity within the Council up to 15 January, provided an update on progress with the planned audit work and progress with implementing internal audit and counter fraud recommendations.

The Service Leader – Internal Audit provided an overview of the Report and highlighted the key areas, including the half time redeployment of a member of the Audit team to the Council's Emergency Centre, and that a new audit on Council Tax was now in progress. Two Internal Audit Reports had been issued since the last meeting, in relation to:-

- Data Matching Bank Accounts used in Covid-19 support payments (new Covid-19 related risk), and
- Petty Cash.

Having heard Councillors Devine and Myles congratulate the staff involved in the payment of Covid-19 support payments, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the update on progress with the planned Internal Audit work; and
- (iii) to note management's progress in implementing internal audit and counter fraud recommendations.

6. PSIAS EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSESSMENT

With reference to Article 6 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 25 November 2014, there was submitted Report No 11/21 by the Service Leader – Internal Audit presenting the results of the 2020 PSIAS External Quality Assessment (EQA) undertaken by the Internal Audit team from Scottish Borders Council. The assessment confirmed compliance with the requirements of the PSIAS and made a small number of recommendations relating to Assurance Mapping and Risk Management.

The Report indicated that the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards placed a requirement for public sector internal audit functions to be subject to an External Quality Assessment at least every five years. This assessment sought to confirm the extent of compliance with the PSIAS.

Appendix 1 provided members with the results of the External Quality Assessment, and overall, this was a very positive assessment which identified that Internal Audit generally conformed with the requirements of the PSIAS. The review had highlighted areas where improvements could be made and an action plan, detailed within the Appendix, addressed the areas where improved compliance was required.

Having heard from Jill Stacey, Scottish Borders Council, and Councillor Bell query the statement regarding limited oversight and scrutiny by elected members in terms of the Council's risk management function, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the contents of the Report and the External Quality Assessment Report; and
- (ii) to approve the action plan detailed within Appendix 1 to the Report.

7. CORPORATE GOVERNANCE – ACTION PLAN UPDATES

With reference to Article 5 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 21 January 2020, there was submitted Report No 12/21 by the Director of Strategic Policy, Transformation and Public Sector Reform presenting an update in relation to the Action Plan included in the 2019/20 Annual Governance Statement and also providing an update in relation to the Action Plan from the 2019/20 Scrutiny and Audit Committee Annual Report to Council.

The Report indicated that the final 2019/20 Annual Governance Statement was included in the Council's 2019/20 audited Annual Accounts, which were approved by this Committee on 24 November 2020. The Annual Governance Statement included an action plan summarising improvement action to be taken forward during 2020/21 to strengthen the Council's corporate governance.

An update to the Annual Governance Statement and Scrutiny & Audit Committee Annual Report Action Plans were included within Appendices 1 and 2 to the Report and approval was sought to extend the completion dates on a number of the actions. A further update would be reported to this Committee in June 2021 as part of the annual corporate governance review and August 2021 as part of the draft annual report for 2020/21, and would include any new actions identified as part of the 2021 self-assessment exercise.

The Service Leader (Governance and Change) provided an overview of the Report, and responded to Councillor Bell in relation to members' training.

Thereafter, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the update to the 2019/20 Annual Governance Statement Action Plan included within Appendix 1 to the Report;
- (ii) to note the update to 2019/20 Scrutiny and Audit Committee Annual Report Action Plan to Council included within Appendix 2 to the Report;
- (iii) to approve the extension to the completion dates on specific actions as set out in Sections 3.2 and 4.2 of the Report; and
- (iv) that a workshop be arranged with the Scrutiny and Audit Committee to be held on 29 April 2021 (10am to 12 noon) to undertake a self-assessment exercise to support the ongoing work of the Committee.

8. CHANGE PROGRAMME UPDATE

With reference to Article 5 of the minute of meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee of 8 December 2020, there was submitted Report No 314/20 by the Director of Finance providing a progress update in relation to the Council's Change Programme, relating to the 3-year planning period 2020/21 to 2022/23.

The Report indicated that work had been ongoing to monitor and scrutinise the performance of all the projects in the change programme. The 'locked-down' position achieved for financial year 2020/21 was that £8,577,214 of savings had been achieved, subject to the AHSCP and ANGUSalve positions being confirmed.

This equated to meeting 95% of the Council's updated target of £9,033,214 for 2020/21. The reconciliation of the changes to the revised target savings for this financial year were included in Section 5 of the Report.

The Service Leader (Governance and Change) provided an overview of the key areas of the Report.

Thereafter, having heard from Councillor Braes in relation to the Consultant to facilitate Integrated Energy System, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the progress update in relation to the Council's Change Programme 2020/21 to 2022/23; and

- (ii) to note the updated savings to be delivered by the Change Programme 2020/21 to 2022/23 and the associated risks which still remained to the delivery of those savings.

9. CORPORATE RISKS AND RISK MANAGEMENT

With reference to Article 7 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 21 January 2020, there was submitted Report No 13/21 by the Chief Executive providing an update on the training being undertaken to embed the council's risk management framework into its operations and decision making processes, and also advising that the corporate risk register had been reviewed and updated.

The Report indicated that risk management training with the corporate leadership team had been undertaken in January 2020 however the planned roll out of this training was suspended in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Training would now restart in January 2021 with all directors and service leads being invited to attend training hosted by QA, the external provider and thereafter more specific training and guidance would be carried out with individual senior management teams to assist in their identification of risks to the provision of their directorate, service objectives and outcomes.

The Report also indicated that the corporate risk register had been reviewed and risks updated, with the risk dashboard updated accordingly. The climate change risk had been added and a new recovery and renewal risk was currently being developed. The EU exit risk had been reviewed down from red to amber as a deal has been agreed however, continued monitoring would be undertaken by the Brexit Officers Group. The dashboard and detailed risks were contained within Appendices 1 and 2 of the Report.

Having heard from the Chief Executive, and from Councillors Bell, Whiteside, Myles, McDonald, Braes and Boyd in relation to Covid-19 risks, EU exit and businesses, IT risk and services and climate change risks, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the planned risk management training programme; and
- (ii) to note the corporate risk register dashboard and all risks contained therein.

10. REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS (SCOTLAND) ACT 2000 – QUARTERLY REPORT

With reference to Article 9 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 24 September 2020, there was submitted Report No 14/21 by the Director of Legal and Democratic Services advising members of the use of surveillance powers by the Council in terms of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers (Scotland) Act 2000 in the period 1 October to 31 December 2020.

The Report indicated that Angus Council was a public authority for the purpose of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers (Scotland) Act 2000 ("RIP(S)A") and had the power to authorise directed covert surveillance and the use of covert human intelligence sources. Covert activities covered by RIP(S)A would be lawful if the activities were authorised and if they were conducted in accordance with the authorisation.

In the period 1 October to 31 December 2020, no covert surveillance activities were authorised and there were no authorisations in respect of the use of a Covert Human Intelligence Source.

The Committee agreed to note that no authorisations were granted for surveillance and other investigatory activities regulated by the Regulation of Investigatory Powers (Scotland) Act 2000 in the period 1 October to 31 December 2020.

Following conclusion of the business, the Chief Executive advised the Committee that Mrs Gillian Woolman was changing role within Audit Scotland and would no longer be attending any future meetings of this Committee. She intimated that she would look forward to welcoming Mrs Carol Grant, Mrs Woolman's successor, to a future meeting.