

ANGUS COUNCIL

MINUTE of MEETING of the **SCRUTINY AND AUDIT COMMITTEE** held remotely on Thursday 9 March 2023 at 2.00pm.

Present: Councillors CRAIG FOTHERINGHAM, GAVIN NICOL, CHRIS BEATTIE, JULIE BELL, LYNNE DEVINE, HEATHER DORAN, IAIN GALL, ROSS GREIG, LOUISE NICOL, RONNIE PROCTOR MBE, MARTIN SHEPHERD, LOIS SPEED and IAN McLAREN.

Councillor FOTHERINGHAM, Convener, in the Chair.

1. APOLOGIES/SUBSTITUTES

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Councillor Derek Wann, with Councillor Ian McLaren substituting.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/STATEMENTS OF TRANSPARENCY

There were no declarations of interest or statements of transparency made.

3. MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minute of meeting of this Committee of 31 January 2023 was approved as a correct record and signed by the Convener.

4. SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE – QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 1 OCTOBER 2022 TO 31 DECEMBER 2022

With reference to Article 4 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 29 November 2022, there was submitted Report No 73/23 by the Local Senior Officer, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, relating to quarter three (1 October to 31 December) of 2022 on the performance and activities in support of the priorities in the Local Fire and Rescue Plan for Angus 2020 and the wider community planning priorities.

Attached as an Appendix to the Report was the detailed breakdown and analysis of all data collected during the reporting period which also included an overview of a range of community safety engagement events and partnership working.

Jason Sharp, Local Senior Officer provided a brief overview of the 6 priority areas as outlined in the Local Fire and Rescue Plan for Angus.

Mark Lowe, Group Commander confirmed that following public consultation in relation to Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (UFAS), Scottish Fire and Rescue Service would stop attending automatic fire alarm (AFA) call outs to commercial business and workplace premises with effect from 1 July 2023, unless a fire was confirmed. He emphasised that these changes did not apply to sleeping premises, such as hospitals, care homes, hotels or domestic dwellings.

He also provided a brief overview of the Report and was also heard in relation to the key performance indicators, targets and the Community Safety Engagement Programmes and Notable Events as outlined in Appendices 1 and 2 of the Report. He also extended invitations to members to the large scale multi agency exercise at Caledonian Railway planned for 21 April 2023 and a tri service community event being held at Carnoustie Fire Station on 10 March 2023.

Councillors Bell, Doran, Devine, Proctor, Speed, Fotheringham and Shepherd raised questions and sought further information in relation to costs of unwanted fire alarm signals and future savings in services post change from 1 July 2023; Road Traffic Collisions and categories; Lintrathen Loch, AHSCP related training and development events; UFAS; and community engagement and initiatives. In response, the Local Senior Officer and Group Commander provided informative updates.

The Local Senior Officer and Group Commander confirmed that they would follow up the requests for further information and revert back post meeting in relation to UFAS costs and future savings post implementation of the new process; road traffic collision KPIs including detailed breakdown of categories/injuries; and AHSCP related training and development events.

The Convener took the opportunity to commend the service for their involvement in the vast amount of community events, thereafter Councillor Doran also emphasised the importance and value of the preventative measures and work being taken forward by the service.

In response, the Group Commander also extended his gratitude to local businesses for releasing on call personnel to support the service.

The Committee agreed to note the performance of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service as outlined in the quarterly monitoring Report for the period 1 October 2022 to 31 December 2022.

5. POLICE SCOTLAND

(a) ANGUS LOCAL POLICING AREA QUARTERLY REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 1 OCTOBER 2022 TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2022

With reference to Article 5(a) of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 29 November 2022, there was submitted Report No 74/23 by Chief Superintendent Phil Davison, which updated the Committee on the performance results for the period 1 October 2022 to 31 December 2022.

Appendix A to the Report outlined the performance in relation to the identified policing objectives and outcomes which were monitored and reviewed at the monthly Tasking and Delivery meeting. The data provided in the Report was for information purposes to allow members to conduct their scrutiny responsibilities under the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012.

Chief Superintendent Phil Davison, accompanied by Chief Inspector Leanne Blacklaw, Local Area Commander for Angus provided a brief introduction to the Report, thereafter Chief Inspector Blacklaw provided an informative overview of the 7 local policing priority areas of the Report

Councillors Bell, Doran, and Greig raised questions and sought further information including a request for a further breakdown of the non-recent rape crimes reported, increase in shoplifting cases and most sought items stolen; further statistical information on non-fatal road traffic collisions (RTCs) and non-fatal overdoses; and also a further breakdown in terms of drug wipe testing statistics; and in response, Chief Superintendent Davison and Chief Inspector Blacklaw provided informative updates.

Chief Superintendent Davison also agreed to look further into the requests for further breakdown in statistical information in relation to non-recent sexual crimes recorded, non-fatal overdoses, drug wipe testing, and trends in shoplifting items.

Councillor Devine welcomed the new driver scheme (NDS) and Rider Refinement North (RRN) scheme. Councillor Proctor commended the comprehensive Report and also conveyed his appreciation to Police Scotland's initiative-taking approach.

In echoing the sentiments of Councillors Devine and Proctor, the Convener on behalf of the Committee commended the hard work of Police Scotland.

The Committee agreed to note the Angus Local Policing Area Quarterly Report for the period 1 October 2022 to 31 December 2022.

(b) ANGUS LOCAL POLICING PLAN 2023-2026

With reference to Article 5(b) of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 29 November 2022, there was submitted Report No 75/23 by Chief Superintendent Phil Davison providing members with a draft of Angus Local Policing Area Local Policing Plan for 2023-2026.

The Report indicated that the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 Section 47 required Police Scotland to produce Local Police Plans for each of the 32 local authorities in Scotland.

The Angus Local Police Plan (LPP) as outlined in Appendix A described the main priorities and objectives for policing across the local area. The LPP also described how the priorities, objectives and arrangements contributed to the delivery of relevant local outcomes, strategies and development plans including those that were defined through community planning.

Chief Superintendent Phil Davidson provided an overview of the key areas of the Local Policing Plan for the period 2023-2026. He also provided an informative response to Councillor Bell's question in relation to Mental Health Services. Councillor Doran in reference to National Strategic Objective 1, acknowledged the continued promotion of the uptake of Naloxone and also took the opportunity to urge all those in attendance to take up the training.

The Committee agreed to note the Angus Local Policing Area Local Police Plan 2023-2026.

6. JOINT INSPECTION OF ADULT SUPPORT AND PROTECTION IN ANGUS

There was submitted Report No 76/23 by the Chief Executive summarising the outcome of the joint inspection of multi-agency arrangements for adult support and protection in Angus that had taken place between September 2022 and January 2023.

The Report indicated the purpose of the joint inspection was to seek assurance that adults at risk of harm in Scotland were supported and protected by existing national and local adult support and protection arrangements. The inspection programme was one element of an overall Scottish Government improvement plan.

The focus of the joint inspection was the contributions of Social Work, Police Scotland, Health and other agencies to keep adults at risk of harm safe, and how they worked collaboratively to do this. The inspection process included five scrutiny activities which were outlined in Section 4 of the Report. The Joint Inspection of Adult Support and Protection in Angus was outlined in Appendix 1 to the Report.

In welcoming the positive Report, Gail Smith, Chief Officer, Integration, provided an overview of the inspection process, summary of the findings, strengths identified and also the areas identified for improvement. She advised that the improvement plan was in development and required to be submitted to the Care Inspectorate for review no later than 15 March 2023.

The Chief Officer thanked all those involved in the inspection process, thereafter enquired if the Committee were requesting a whole report or an exceptions report to be brought back to a future meeting.

Councillors Devine and Bell welcomed the positive Report and also commended the Chief Officer and her team for the work involved during the inspection process and sought further information in terms of the identified areas of improvement around service user engagement and awareness raising and the quality of chronologies.

Councillor Speed referred to the core data set related to initial inquiries into concern in terms of 95% of episodes and sought further clarity regarding the remaining 5% particularly around the differing time periods.

The Chief Officer, in response, provided background update in terms of quality of chronologies and in relation to engagement and awareness raising for service users, confirmed that an event was scheduled to take place in Spring 2023. In response to Councillor Speed's question in relation to the core data set, she advised that she would require to look further into the operation detail and revert back to Councillor Speed, following the meeting.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the outcome of the inspection; and
- (ii) to request an Exceptions Report be brought back to a future meeting following submission of the Improvement Plan to the Care Inspectorate.

7. ANGUS ADULT PROTECTION COMMITTEE BIENNIAL REPORT 2020 TO 2022

With reference to Article 4 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 26 January 2021, there was submitted Report No 77/23 by the Chief Executive presenting the Angus Adult Protection Committee (AAPC) Biennial Report for 2020 to 2022, approved by AAPC on 7 December 2022 and the Angus Chief Officers Group on 23 January 2023.

The Biennial Report of Angus Adult Protection Committee for the period April 2020 to March 2022 presented the work undertaken in Angus individually, and in partnership, to deliver national, Tayside and local adult protection outcomes to improve the lives of vulnerable adults.

The Report indicated that over the preceding four year period adult protection referrals were consistently circa 400 per annum. During April 2020 to March 2021, saw a 79% year on year increase in the number of adult protection referrals to 728.

The Strategic Plan for AAPC for 2020/23 continued to be based on the overarching strategic goals. Work would continue to increase public awareness in Angus of Adult Protection issues, in line with the priorities of Protecting People Angus and to further integrate the work of the AAPC into the wider Public Protection Partnerships by sharing priorities, maximising opportunity for joint working and minimising duplication.

Mr Ewen West, Independent Chair of the Angus Adult Protection Committee highlighted the positive Joint Inspection of Adult Support and Protection in Angus Report, and provided an overview of the key areas of the Report including the ongoing and future impact of COVID-19; the challenges and areas for improvement in relation to service user involvement and participation; and workload pressures on multi agency workforce. He confirmed that whilst there had been a slight decrease in referrals, referral numbers were still significantly high and work would continue to be progressed to drive forward areas of improvement to support and improve the lives of vulnerable adults.

Councillors Devine, Doran and Proctor raised comments and questions in relation to the source of referrals; health professionals; and support for military veterans.

Councillor Speed sought further information in relation to trends and issues related to links between referrals and significant hours of unmet health and social care needs; increase in referral rates in relation to the younger age group; lack of professional representation at meetings and in terms of service user/carers representation highlighted areas of concern regarding digital exclusion and accessibility issues.

Thereafter in response to members questions, the Chief Officer provided an update and also highlighted that the operational points raised by Councillors Speed and Proctor would require to be further investigated and responses provided following the meeting.

In responding to Councillor Speed's questions, Mr West advised that operational staff provided considerable assistance to support attendance at meetings and where required, alternative provisions were offered. In reference to transitions, Mr West and the Chief Social Work Officer provided updates and acknowledged the increase in referrals of young persons with complex needs and the challenges of ensuring appropriate services were in place and that this area of work would continue to be a priority focus going forward.

Councillors Proctor and Fotheringham commended the excellent Report and conveyed gratitude to the Chief Officer, the Independent Chair and all those involved in the work to provide essential services to the community.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) having scrutinised, to note the contents of the Angus Adult Protection Committee Biennial Report 2020 to 2022 as outlined in the Appendix to the Report; and
- (ii) to note the key trends and areas for development emerging from the Report.

At this point, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Services and Police Scotland representatives left the meeting.

8. INTERNAL AUDIT ACTIVITY UPDATE

With reference to Article 5 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 31 January 2023, there was submitted Report No 78/23 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 provided an update in relation to the Internal Audit activity within the Council from June 2022 and an update on progress with the planned audit work, including new audits drawn from the audit pool; and the implementation of internal audit and counter fraud recommendations.

The Service Leader – Internal Audit provided an update on progress with the Internal Audit activity; Comfort Funds and Implementation of Internal Audit Actions.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the update on progress with the planned Internal Audit work as outlined in Appendix 1 to the Report; and
- (ii) to note management's progress in implementing internal audit and counter fraud recommendations as outlined in Appendix 1 to the Report.

Councillor Shepherd left the meeting during consideration of the following item.

9. ANNUAL INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2023-2024

With reference to Article 10 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 1 March 2022, there was submitted Report No 79/23 by the Service Leader – Internal Audit presenting the Service Leader's Internal Audit Plan for 2023/24, for approval.

The Report indicated that in terms of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS), the Service Leader - Internal Audit was required to set a risk based audit plan sufficient to provide the required assurances to members and officers in relation to corporate governance, risk management and internal controls.

Attached as Appendix 1 to the Report were the outcomes of the annual planning exercise and the Service Leader's proposed 2023/24 Internal Audit Plan, for approval. The 2023/24 Internal Audit Plan set out the proposed activity to be performed by the Council's Internal Audit team in

order to allow the Service Leader - Internal Audit to provide an Annual Internal Audit Opinion in June 2023.

The Service Leader, Internal Audit provided a brief overview of the key areas of the Report including the planning approach and risk assessment model.

Councillor Doran sought clarity regarding the audit team resources including impact and challenges arising from workforce pressures and reduction in workforce, and in response, the Service Leader, Internal Audit intimated that there were notable delays in responses being received, which as a result impacted on the audit process. She indicated that the audit team would shortly be re-assessing the position to consider changes that might expedite the audit process going forward.

In response to Councillor Devine's question related to Climate Change target score, the Depute Chief Executive provided an update and confirmed that once work was in progress to deliver the plan, it was expected that this would lead to a greater understanding and potential review of the target score.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note that a risk-based approach methodology had been utilised to develop the proposal Internal Audit Plan for 2023/24; and
- (ii) to approve the proposed 2023/24 Internal Audit Plan.

10. REPORTS RELEVANT TO THE WORK OF THE SCRUTINY AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

With reference to Article 15 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 23 June 2022, there was submitted Report No 80/23 by the Service Leader – Internal Audit advising members of reports submitted to other Angus Council committees, the Council, Tayside Contracts and the IJB that were relevant to the work of the Scrutiny and Audit Committee.

Attached as Appendix 1 to the Report was a list of reports covering the period 13 May 2022 to 27 January 2023.

Councillor Bell sought clarity in terms of housing voids, and in response, the Service Leader, Internal Audit confirmed that Housing Void Management Audit was to be taken forward for review and was included in the Annual Audit Plan for 2023/24, and that further information was also available on the Housing Regulator website.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to review the Reports outlined in Appendix 1 to the Report; and
- (ii) that no further detailed discussion on any of the Reports was required at this time.

11. DETAILED RISK REPORTING TO SCRUTINY AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

With reference to Article 8 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 31 January 2023, there was submitted Report No 81/23 by the Service Leader – Internal Audit presenting detailed risk information to the Scrutiny and Audit Committee in line with the programme agreed by this Committee in June 2022 (Report 163/22 refers) and subsequently confirmed in August 2022 (Report 207/22 refers).

The Depute Chief Executive provided an informative update in relation to the Health and Safety Compliance Risk. In highlighting the considerable improvements and progress made in implementing the action plan, he confirmed that the current risk score had been reduced from 12 to 9 and that the objective was to achieve a target risk appetite of 6.

He also took the opportunity to commend Paul Conroy and his team for all the work involved in leading and progressing the improvements in the Health and Safety Compliance Risk.

The main reasons for the reduction in the overall risk score was around the significant progress made in the development of a digital health and safety system, in collaboration with two other local authority areas. The digital system was providing services with significantly improved health and safety data and intelligence at all levels. He also highlighted that information was being monitored at all different levels which had provided a fuller understanding around some service areas.

He also highlighted that there had been significant improved rates of incident reporting but emphasised the need to build on the culture to recognise the importance of health and safety in the workplace and the need to improve the reporting of “near-miss” incidents. He intimated that improved visibility on the ground and at the frontline of services would contribute to improving the action targets of the highest risk areas.

In response to Councillor Bell’s question regarding the use and benefits of the stress assessment in supporting employees, the Team Leader, Risk Resilience and Safety provided an informative update.

The Committee agreed to note the information presented in relation to the Health and Safety Compliance Risk.

12. COMPLAINTS & COMPLIMENTS REPORT – 1 OCTOBER – 31 DECEMBER 2022

With reference to Article 11 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 29 November 2022, there was submitted Report No 82/23 by the Director of Legal and Democratic Services highlighting the complaints received in Quarter 3 from 1 October 2022 to 31 December 2022 and to provide assurance to members that work was ongoing to learn from complaints received by Angus Council. The Report also included details of compliments received during the same period.

The Report provided the complaint statistics for the third quarter of 2022. Appendix 1 to the Report provided a breakdown per service area.

During 1 October to 31 December 2022, Angus Council received 150 complaints. Section 5 of the Report provided a breakdown of quarter 3 complaints; performance indicators, housing repairs and satisfaction survey update; examples of compliments received and samples of changes made as a direct result of a complaint being received.

Councillor Speed raised concerns and questions in terms of the complaints process, and in response, the Team Leader – Members Service intimated that she had recently been in contact with Councillor Speed and noting the concerns and questions raised, she suggested that a complaints process and procedure briefing session be arranged for members in due course.

The Convener, on behalf of the Committee, welcomed the offer of a briefing session to be provided to elected members in due course.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the complaint statistics for the period;
- (ii) to note the sample of compliments received for the period; and
- (iii) to note the complaints received by each of the Council’s Directorates as outlined in Appendix 1 to the Report.