

## Minute of Meeting

### Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board

Date	Time	Venue
Monday, 13 February 2017	10:00	CMR 1, Council Headquarters, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley, PA1 1AN

**Present:** Councillor Derek Bibby, Councillor Maria Brown, Councillor John Caldwell, Provost Anne Hall, Councillor James MacLaren, Councillor Cathy McEwan, Councillor Jim Sharkey

#### Chair

Councillor J Sharkey, Convener, presided.

#### In Attendance

N Irvine Brown, Assistant Strategic Planning & Policy Development Manager and G Wilson, Assistant Policy Officer (both Chief Executive's); C Grainger, Service Planning & Policy Development Manager, D Kerr, Service Co-ordination Manager and D McNab, Transportation Manager (all Community Resources); A Bennett, Housing Services Manager (Development & Housing Services); and A MacArthur, Head of Finance, R McGrath, Head of Customer & Business Services, A McMahon, Chief Auditor and L Belshaw, Democratic Services Manager (all Finance & Resources).

#### Also Attending

D McConnell, M Ferris and T Reid, Audit Scotland.

#### Apology

Councillor M Devine.

#### Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest intimated prior to the commencement of the meeting.

## **1 Summary of Internal Audit Findings to 31 December 2016**

There was submitted a report by the Chief Auditor relative to the requirement, in terms of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS), that Internal Audit communicated the results of each engagement to the Board. The appendix to the report provided a summary of findings in relation to final reports issued for those engagements completed during the period to 31 December 2016.

The report intimated that, in addition to the reports listed in the appendix, Internal Audit had an ongoing commitment to: a range of corporate and service initiatives, progress information security matters in partnership with ICT and Legal Services, provide regular advice to officers and internal audit services to the associated bodies for which Renfrewshire Council was the lead authority and to Renfrewshire Leisure Limited, Renfrewshire Health & Social Care Integration Joint Board, co-ordination of the Council's corporate risk management activity and management of the counter fraud, risk management and insurance teams.

**DECIDED:** That the summary of audit findings, reported during the quarter 1 October to 31 December 2016 be noted.

### **Sederunt**

Provost Hall entered the meeting during consideration of the following item.

## **2 Internal Audit and Counter-Fraud Progress and Performance to 31 December 2016**

There was submitted a report by the Chief Auditor relative to internal audit and counter-fraud progress and performance in terms of the delivery of the audit plan. The report intimated that the Internal Audit Annual Plan had been approved by the Board at its meeting held on 21 March 2016 and that normally internal audit measured the progress of the performance of the team on a regular basis using a range of performance indicators (PIs). However, there had been a transfer mid-year to a revised audit management system and this was still being populated and accordingly only the percentage of the Audit Plan completion PIs was available for the period.

In terms of counter-fraud, the report noted that the current focus in this area was establishing the priorities for the new team and no performance targets would be established for 2016/17.

The report detailed progress against local and national initiatives involving internal audit and the counter-fraud team.

**DECIDED:** That the internal audit and counter-fraud team progress and performance to 31 December 2016 be noted.

## **3 Audit Scotland Annual Audit Plan 2016/17**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Finance & Resources relative to Audit Scotland's Annual Audit Plan 2016/17 and which was appended to the report. The report intimated that based on their analysis of the risks facing the Council, the audit plan outlined Audit Scotland's approach to the audit of the 2016/17 financial statements of the Council and the charities it controlled in order to assess whether they provided a

true and fair view of the financial position of the Council, and also whether they had been prepared in accordance with proper accounting practice. The Plan outlined the responsibilities of Audit Scotland and the Council; their assessment of key challenges and risks and the approach and timetable for completion of the audit.

**DECIDED:** That the report and Audit Scotland's Annual Audit Plan 2016/17 be noted.

#### **4 Report by Audit Scotland "Local Government in Scotland - Financial Overview 2015/16"**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Finance & Resources relative to the Audit Scotland report "Local Government in Scotland – Financial Overview 2015/16" which was the first in a new series of overview reports. The purpose of these overview reports was to provide a high-level, independent view of matters affecting local government with the purpose of assisting councillors and senior officers. The next report in the series would be published in March 2017 and would focus on the performance of council services and the challenges facing councils.

The overview report provided a strategic financial analysis for local government and concentrated on four key themes: the overall financial health of local government; the significant challenges for local government finance; the need to change the way councils dealt with financial challenges and the requirement for a long-term financial strategy. The report intimated that Renfrewshire Council was well placed in addressing the key issues raised by Audit Scotland but that significant financial and demand pressures continued to be experienced and that ongoing action was required to ensure continued sound financial stability.

**DECIDED:** That the Audit Scotland report "Local Government in Scotland – Financial Overview 2015/16" be noted.

#### **5 2015/16 Whole of Government Accounts**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Finance & Resources relative to the Council's Whole of Government Accounts (WGA) return. The report intimated that the Council was required to submit for audit each year a WGA return based on the Council's annual accounts, which once audited was submitted to the Scottish Government and then to HM Treasury for consolidation in the UK-wide public sector accounts. Unfortunately, as a result of miscommunication between the audit team and the Council's corporate finance staff, there was a late submission of information to the Scottish Government which had resulted in a technical qualification of part of the overall Whole of Government Accounts (WGA) return submitted, solely due to its late receipt. Internal accounts completion timetables and procedures had been amended to ensure no recurrence of this issue.

**DECIDED:** That the report be noted.

#### **6 Annual Complaints 2015/16**

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive relative to information on the complaints received by the Council in 2015/16 and how this information had been used to ensure that the Council delivered high quality, efficient and responsive services. The report intimated that 6860 complaints were received during 2015/16 which was an increase from 5725 in 2014/15 reflecting the national trend of sustained increase in the number of complaints handled by Scottish local authorities since the model complaints

handling procedure was introduced in 2013. The report provided details on the average time to respond to complaints, the number of complaints which had been upheld and a breakdown of complaints by service. The breakdown of complaints received by service was broadly reflective of the nature and volume of services provided. It was noted that only a very small number of complaints received were escalated to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman, 52 in 2015/16, none of which were fully investigated and only one was partly upheld.

It was proposed that, in relation to the analysis of complaints received by service, there be a further breakdown of these in future reports in terms of the numbers received in each category. This was agreed.

**DECIDED:**

(a) That the report be noted; and

(b) That in relation to the analysis of complaints received by service, there be a further breakdown of these in future reports in terms of the numbers received in each category.

Prior to consideration of the following item, the Convener welcomed Ms McEwan to the meeting.

## **7 Petition: Bus Stop and Shelter, Barrhead Road, Paisley**

Under reference to item 13 of the Minute of the meeting of the Board held on 28 November 2016 there was submitted a report by the Director of Finance & Resources relative to the petition which had been received from Ms McEwan in the following terms:

“To reinstate the bus stop and shelter on Barrhead Road, adjacent to Barscube Terrace – because of concerns and issues of access for those disabled and elderly passengers.”

It was noted that the Head of Amenity Services had advised that the bus shelter had been assessed for safety reasons and as a result had been decommissioned. Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) had removed the bus stop flag and bus operators had been advised they should no longer use the stop. However, the shelter required to remain in place as it formed part of the bus shelter advertising contract. The Board at its meeting held on 28 November 2016, having heard from the petitioner and the Transportation Manager agreed that there be an investigation of what measures would be required to make the shelter Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant. The Transportation Manager advised that the potential for making this shelter bus-compliant for use by disabled people had been investigated further and it would require extensive works and the building of retaining walls. He indicated that the location was not practical for a bus stop or shelter.

The Board heard from Ms McEwan and the Transportation Manager and it was proposed that a site visit be arranged with those members who wished to attend, the petitioner, relevant officers and representatives from SPT, following which the matter be considered further at a future meeting of the Board. This was agreed.

**DECIDED:** That a site visit be arranged with those members who wished to attend, the petitioner, relevant officers and representatives from SPT, following which the matter be considered further at a future meeting of the Board.

