

Minute of Meeting Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board

Date	Time	Venue
Monday, 25 April 2016	10:00	CMR 1, Council Headquarters, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley, PA1 1AN

PRESENT

Councillors B Brown, M Brown, Caldwell, Grady, Provost Hall, Councillors McEwan, J MacLaren, Perrie and J Sharkey.

CHAIR

Councillor J Sharkey, Convener, presided.

IN ATTENDANCE

N Irvine-Brown, Policy Lead - Performance and Quality (Chief Executive's); C Grainger, Planning & Performance Manager, Lead Officer (Community Resources); K Graham, Head of Corporate Governance, A MacArthur, Head of Finance, L Belshaw, Democratic Services Manager and A McMahon, Chief Auditor (all Finance & Resources).

ALSO ATTENDING

A McGregor, Audit Scotland.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor J Sharkey declared an interest in item 6 of the Agenda as he was a member of the KNOW (Kids Need Our Ward) Campaign.

SEDERUNT

Councillor J MacLaren entered the meeting during consideration of the following item.

1 LOCAL SCRUTINY PLAN 2016/17 FOR RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive relative to the Local Scrutiny Plan 2016/17 for Renfrewshire Council, providing an overview of the key points.

The report intimated that the Local Scrutiny Plan was prepared each year by the Local Area Network which consisted of representatives from all the main scrutiny bodies that engaged with the Council - Audit Scotland, the Care Inspectorate, Education Scotland and the Scottish Housing Regulator. The Local Area Network met annually to carry out a shared risk assessment and decided whether the Council required external scrutiny in any specific areas for the year ahead. The conclusion of the Local Area Network at the end of this year's shared risk assessment was that no scrutiny risks had been identified which required specific scrutiny. However, audit and inspection work would continue to take place and the Council would also be subject to a range of scrutiny that was part of national activity. A table setting out the planned external scrutiny was included in the Local Scrutiny Plan.

It was noted that during 2016 the appointment of a new external audit team would take place for all Scottish councils and a new approach to best value would be implemented. Once guidance on the approach for the new best value audits was available a report would be submitted to the Board.

DECIDED:

- (a) That it be noted that no scrutiny risks had been identified for 2016/17 which required specific scrutiny by the Local Area Network;
- (b) That the planned external audit activity for 2016/17, as set out in Appendix 1 of the Local Scrutiny Plan, be noted; and
- (c) That it be agreed that a paper on the new Best Value Audits be presented to a future meeting of the Board.

2 ANNUAL REVIEW OF COMPLIANCE WITH THE LOCAL CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

There was submitted a report by the Director of Finance & Resources relative to the annual review of the local Code of Corporate Governance, the system by which councils directed and controlled their functions and related to their communities.

The Council's local Code of Corporate Governance came into effect on 1 April 2002 and was updated annually to incorporate required changes and improvements that had been made. Corporate governance ensured that councils did the right things in the right way for the right people in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner. The evidence provided in the appendix to the report demonstrated that strong governance arrangements were in place within the Council and that officers were working together to lead and manage the Council in order to provide vital public services. The Code reflected the increased importance placed by the Council on self-assessment and activities involving greater scrutiny of services. It also linked to the best value criteria where governance and accountability were key elements against which the Council was assessed.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the Council's compliance with the Local Code of Corporate Governance set out in the appendix to the report be noted; and
- (b) That it be agreed that the Local Code of Corporate Governance be reviewed again in 2017.

3 COMPLIANCE WITH THE CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

There was submitted a report by the Chief Auditor relative to compliance with the Local Code of Corporate Governance.

It was noted that Director of Finance & Resources had responsibility for reporting annually to the Board on compliance with the Code and any changes to the Code that might be necessary to maintain it and ensure its effectiveness in practice, this report was considered at item 2 of this Minute.

In addition, the Council's Chief Auditor had responsibility to review independently and report to the Board annually to provide assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Code and the extent of the Council's compliance. The report intimated that Internal Audit had reviewed the Code and had confirmed that the Council complied with its requirements and had indicated that it was evident that the Code had been subject to review and updating. The Director of Finance & Resources had endorsed the Chief Auditor's recommendation that the Local Code should continue to be subject to annual review to ensure that it continued to reflect developments and best practice in governance.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

4 SUMMARY OF INTERNAL AUDIT FINDINGS FOR QUARTER TO END OF MARCH 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 1 January to 31 March 2016.

The report intimated that, in addition to the reports listed in the appendix, Internal Audit had an ongoing commitment to arrange 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, co-ordination of the Council's corporate risk management activity and management of the counter fraud, risk management and insurance teams.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

5 AUDIT SCOTLAND ANNUAL AUDIT PLAN 2015/16

There was submitted a report by the Director of Finance & Resources relative to Audit Scotland's Annual Audit Plan 2015/16.

The report intimated that based on their analysis of the risks facing the Council, Audit Scotland had submitted an audit plan which outlined their approach to the audit of the 2015/16 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 the key challenges and risks and the approach and timetable for completion of the audit.

It was noted that Audit Scotland had also published further guidance for elected members with regard to the annual accounts "Why the Accounts Matter" and this was appended to the report.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor J Sharkey having previously declared an interest in the following item remained in the meeting.

6 REVIEW OF WARD 15 (CHILDREN'S WARD) ROYAL ALEXANDRA HOSPITAL (LEAD OFFICER COLIN GRAINGER)

Under reference to item 9 of page 548 of the Minute of the meeting of the Board held on 21 March 2016, there was submitted a report by the Lead Officer relative to progress with the review.

The report intimated that a range of key information had been provided by NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (NHSGGC) and this was appended to the report. The areas in respect of which information had been provided included the options appraisal exercise undertaken as part of the previous review of provision of paediatric services undertaken in 2011/12; a survey of travel to ward 15 carried out as part of the consultation process in 2011/12; and travelling costs and the availability of subsidies for assisting parents and carers. It was noted that the Lead Officer continued to have discussions with NHSGGC regarding activity levels, staffing levels and quality reports relating to the Royal Alexandra Hospital, Paisley and the Royal Hospital for Sick Children.

It was intimated that a special meeting of the Board would be held on 23 May 2016 at which representatives from NHSGGC would attend. It was proposed that the Lead Officer provide representatives from NHSGGC with a list of potential questions prior to their attendance at the special meeting of the Board. This was agreed.

DECIDED:

(a) That the progress of the review be noted;

(b) That the information provided by NHSGGC be noted;

(c) That it be noted that a special meeting of the Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board would be convened on 23 May 2016 which would be attended by representatives of NHSGGC; and

(d) That the Lead Officer provide representatives from NHSGGC with a list of potential questions prior to their attendance at the special meeting of the Board.

7 PETITION: ALLOCATION OF TENANCY

There was submitted a report by the Director of Finance & Resources relative to a petition which had been received relative to the allocation of a tenancy to the petitioner.

The report intimated that the Head of Corporate Governance considered that the petition was not valid in terms of paragraph 3(b)(iii) of the Council's procedures for dealing with petitions, namely "petitions which dealt with personal or business interests".

The report advised that notwithstanding the Head of Corporate Governance's view, it was for the Board to determine the validity of the petition and whether they wished to hear it.

The Convener proposed that the petition be not heard as it was not valid in terms of the Council's procedures for dealing with petitions. This was agreed unanimously.

DECIDED: That the petition was not valid in terms of the Council's procedures for dealing with petitions and that it be not heard.

8 PETITION: BREAKDOWN OF COSTS FOR WORKS

There was submitted a report by the Director of Finance & Resources relative to a petition which had been received relative to the breakdown of costs of external works to the petitioner's property.

The report intimated that the Head of Corporate Governance considered that the petition was not valid in terms of paragraph 3(b)(iii) of the Council's procedures for dealing with petitions, namely "petitions which dealt with personal or business interests".

The report advised that notwithstanding the Head of Corporate Governance's view, it was for the Board to determine the validity of the petition and whether they wished to hear it.

The Convener proposed that the petition be not heard as it was not valid in terms of the Council's procedures for dealing with petitions. This was agreed unanimously.

DECIDED: That the petition was not valid in terms of the Council's procedures for dealing with petitions and that it be not heard.