

Minute of Meeting Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board

Date	Time	Venue
Monday, 22 January 2018	10:00	Corporate Meeting Room 1, Council Headquarters, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley, PA1 1AN

Present: Councillor Tom Begg, Councillor Bill Binks, Councillor Stephen Burns, Councillor Michelle Campbell, Councillor Jim Sharkey

Chair

Councillor Binks, Convener, presided.

In Attendance

P MacLeod, Director of Children's Services; L Feely, Housing Asset & Investment Manager (Development & Housing Services); C Hunter, Environmental Improvements Manager (Environment & Communities); and A MacArthur, Head of Finance, K Locke, Risk Manager and C MacDonald, Senior Committee Services Officer (all Finance & Resources).

Also in Attendance

D McConnell and A Haahr (both Audit Scotland).

Apologies

Councillor Alison Jean Dowling, Councillor Neill Graham and Councillor Emma Rodden.

Declarations of Interest

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

1 **Audit Scotland Annual Audit Plan 2017/18**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Finance & Resources relative to Audit Scotland's Annual Audit Plan 2017/18, a copy of 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 2017/18 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 2017/18 be noted.

2 **Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) Annual Report 2016/17**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Finance & Resources relative to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman's (SPSO) annual report. The report intimated that the SPSO was the final stage for complaints about Councils, the National Health Service, housing associations, colleges, universities, prisons, most water providers, the Scottish Government and its agencies and departments and most Scottish authorities. Local government remained the sector about which the SPSO received most complaints (37%) with the NHS receiving the second highest number (34%). No complaint details for specific organisations were included in the report. However, information was received separately from the SPSO which indicated that the number of complaints received relative to Renfrewshire was 47 compared with 56 in 2015/16.

During the period of the report the SPSO determined 49 complaints against the Council. Received and determined numbers did not tally as complaints determined included cases carried forward from previous years. Of the 49 complaints determined during the period, five were investigated, three were fully upheld, one was partly upheld and one was not upheld. Copies of the SPSO decision reports relative to the three fully upheld and one partly upheld were attached as appendices to the report. The SPSO would not generally consider a complaint unless the complainer had gone through the Council's complaints procedure fully. In 2016/17 the Council received 6364 complaints. The SPSO indicated that a low uphold rate suggested a robustness in an authority's handling of complaints.

DECIDED:

(a) That the report be noted; and

(b) That it be noted of the 49 complaints against Renfrewshire Council determined by the SPSO in 2016/17, five were fully investigated, three were fully upheld and one was partly upheld.

3 Fly-Tipping in the Countryside and at known Fly-Tipping Spots (Lead Officer Karen Locke)

Under reference to item 13(b) of the Minute of the meeting of this Board held on 6 November 2017 there was submitted a report by the Lead Officer relative to the Board's review of fly-tipping in the countryside and at known fly-tipping spots.

The report provided an update on progress of the review and information that had been prepared for the Board's interest to date.

The report advised that the review would look at the research available to understand the extent of fly-tipping in general in Scotland and specifically in Renfrewshire and identify key reasons that motivated both individuals and organisations towards fly-tipping. The report outlined the methodology that was to be used and advised that invitations had been extended to key stakeholders to attend future meetings of the Board to provide evidence from their respective areas of expertise.

The report detailed background information on fly-tipping in Scotland and in Renfrewshire and highlighted what constituted fly-tipped waste and the causes of and motivation towards fly-tipping. The report noted that the Lead Officer would ensure that the presentations from those invited to present to the Board would be made available in advance in order that the Members would have an opportunity to consider any questions that they would wish to explore.

It was proposed that, in addition to the data outlined within the report, the Lead Officer would provide a split of data between rural and town complaints; explore whether there was any data pertaining to fly-tipping behind tenement buildings; provide data in an additional format in relation to the table outlined in paragraph 6.5 of the report to make it easier to note trends; to confirm if CCTV was present in Clarence Street and McKerral Street, Paisley and check if there was any relationship/correlation between CCTV use and fly-tipping behaviour; and to invite a representative from the appropriate Tenants & Residents Association which covered Clarence Street, Paisley to the Board to give evidence. This was agreed.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the progress of the review be noted;
- (b) That the information provided be noted;
- (c) That the next steps be noted;
- (d) That it be agreed that a split of data be provided between rural and town complaints;
- (e) That it be agreed that the Lead Officer would explore whether there was any data pertaining to fly-tipping behind tenement buildings;
- (f) That it be agreed that the Lead Officer would provide data in an additional format in relation to the table outlined in paragraph 6.5 of the report to make it easier to note trends;

(g) That it be agreed that the Lead Officer confirm if CCTV was present in Clarence Street and McKerral Street, Paisley and check if there was any relationship/correlation between CCTV use and fly-tipping behaviour; and

(h) That it be agreed that a representative from the appropriate Tenants & Residents Association which covered Clarence Street, Paisley be invited to the Board to give evidence.

SEDERUNT

Prior to consideration of the following item, the Convener welcomed Ms M Dymond (Maxwellton Tenants' Association) to the meeting.

4 Review of Housing Repairs by Council and Outside Contractors (Lead Officer Colin Hunter)

Under reference to item 13(c) of the Minute of the meeting of this Board held on 6 November 2017 there was submitted a report by the Lead Officer relative to an update on progress of the Board's review of housing repairs by Council and outside contractors.

The report advised that the Lead Officer had met with representatives from Tenants and Residents Associations across the Council area. Appendix 1 to the report detailed the Tenant and Residents Associations that attended the Repairs Development Group/Council Wide Tenant Forum meetings. Members noted that Williamsburgh Tenants & Resident's Association was not on the list and asked the Lead Officer to check if they had been invited to the meetings. Appendix 2 outlined the housing repair questions that had been put to Tenants and Residents Associations and the responses received.

The report indicated that key statistics from the statutory returns were benchmarked with other local authorities which had similar numbers of housing stock to Renfrewshire Council. Initial analysis of information appeared to support the general consensus that repairs were carried out timeously and to a high standard, although some instances had been noted where this was not the case.

During financial year 2016/17, 54,274 (emergency and non-emergency) reactive repairs were carried out within Council Housing stock. Customer surveys were carried out for Development and Housing Services which recorded a 91.4% satisfaction rate from a sample of 10% of tenants who had a repair undertaken during that financial year. Appendix 3 of the report outlined some of the stated reasons by tenants for both satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the work carried out. Scottish Local Authority annual returns to the Scottish Housing Regulator, including those from Renfrewshire Council, were examined and comparisons undertaken. The comparison results were set out within Appendix 4.

The Convener invited M Dymond, Secretary of Maxwellton Tenants' Association to respond to the points raised within the discussion. There followed a question and answer session at the conclusion of which the Convener thanked M Dymond for her attendance at the meeting and her contribution to the Board's review.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the content of the report and initial conclusions be noted;
- (b) That the next steps for the review process be noted;
- (c) That it be agreed that an invitation be extended to local authorities and appropriate Senior Officers of the Council to attend the Board meeting to be held on 19 March 2018;
- (d) That it be noted that the Lead Officer would report back to the next meeting of the Board to advise if Williamsburgh Tenants & Resident's Association had been invited to the Repairs Development Group/Council Wide Tenant Forum meetings.