

Minute of Meeting

Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board

Date	Time	Venue
Monday, 26 August 2019	10:00	Corporate Meeting Room 1, Council Headquarters, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley, PA1 1AN

Present

Councillor Bill Binks, Councillor Stephen Burns, Councillor Michelle Campbell, Councillor Neill Graham, Councillor Jim Sharkey

In Attendance

N Irvine-Brown, Policy Lead, Performance & Quality, P Moss, Acting Strategic Planning & Policy Development Manager (both Chief Executive's Service); J Mackie, Placement Team Leader and Lead Officer, C Doogan, Energy Team Leader and Lead Officer (all Communities, Housing & Planning Services); G Hannah, Strategic Change Manager and D Kerr, Service Co-ordination Manager and Lead Officer (both Environment & Infrastructure Services); L Neary, Head of Transformation & Organisational Development, A McMahon, Chief Auditor; K Campbell, Assistant Chief Auditor, S Fanning, Principal HR & OD Adviser, E Shields, Business Services Manager, G Caldwell, Service Delivery Manager, M Conaghan, Legal & Democratic Services Manager, and C MacDonald, Senior Committee Services Officer (all Finance & Resources).

Apologies

Councillors Hart, Hood and Rodden.

Declarations of Interest

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

1 Training for Audit, Risk & Scrutiny Board Members

There was submitted a report by the Chief Auditor relative to training for Audit, Risk & Scrutiny Board members.

The report intimated that in line with national guidance produced by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) on the implementation of Audit Committee Principles in Scottish Local Authorities, training on audit and risk related matters was being provided to members of the Audit, Risk & Scrutiny Board. A copy of the proposed programme of training briefings was attached as an Appendix.

The Policy Lead, Performance & Quality, gave a briefing to members on Performance Reporting.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the programme of training briefings be approved; and
- (b) That the briefing provided be noted.

2 Summary of Internal Audit Reports for Period 1 May to 30 June 2019

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 detailed the category of assurance, service, engagement and assurance rating and gave recommended risk ratings for each engagement as either critical, important, good practice or service improvement. A summary of findings was also provided in relation to final reports issued for those engagements completed during the period 1 May to 30 June 2019.

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, provide Internal Audit services to the associated bodies for which Renfrewshire Council was the lead authority and to Renfrewshire Leisure Limited and Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Integration Joint Board, coordination of the Council's Corporate Risk Management activity and management of the counter fraud, risk management and insurance team.

DECIDED: That the summary of Audit findings report for the period 1 May to 30 June 2019 be noted.

3 Internal Audit and Counter Fraud Progress & Performance for period to 30 June 2019

There was submitted a report by the Chief Auditor relative to Internal Audit and Counter Fraud performance from 1 April to 30 June 2019 in terms of the delivery of the Audit Plan for the year and outlining actual performance against targets set by the Director of Finance & Resources. No formal performance targets for fraud investigation had been

established as a major part of the team's work involved being the single point of contact for the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Single Fraud Investigation Service.

It was noted that the focus over the last year had been on increasing fraud awareness amongst employees to prevent fraud from occurring against the Council. The types of fraud referrals received to date were wide-ranging and the team's objective was to concentrate on investigating those referrals considered to contain the greatest fraud risk. The report also detailed the progress made 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 from 1 April to 30 June 2019 be noted.

4 Accounts Commission - Safeguarding Public Money: Are You Getting it Right?

There was submitted a report by the Director of Finance & Resources relative to a series published by the Accounts Commission on "How Councils Work", aimed at supporting councils' drive for continuous improvement. Topics were selected from current themes arising from their Best Value assurance work, performance audits, the work of councils' external auditors and their annual review of local government.

The report advised that in April 2019, the Accounts Commission published their latest report "Safeguarding Public Money: are you getting it right?" which aimed to reinforce the importance of councils having effective internal controls and to help elected members and officers ensure that their Council had adequate internal controls and risk management processes in place to protect public money. The report also provided eight checklists to assist elected members when they were considering the internal controls and risk management arrangements within their Council. The full report was attached as an Appendix.

DECIDED:

(a) That the key messages in the report "Safeguarding Public Money: are you getting it right?" which was attached as an Appendix to the report be noted; and

(b) That it be noted that the main processes and arrangements operated within Renfrewshire Council were outlined in detail in the main body of the report in direct response to the key checklist points outlined in the Accounts Commission report.

5 Absence Statistics - 2019/20 - 26 March 2019 to 24 June 2019

There was submitted a report by the Director of Finance & Resources relative to the Council's absence statistics for the period 26 March to 24 June 2019.

The report provided information in relation to absence targets and how services and categories of staff had performed against them. An analysis of the reasons for absence for the period was included in the report. Information was also provided on supporting attendance activity levels by service and costs of sick pay and the overall number of days lost.

It was proposed that a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Board which included information used to generate the absence report including demographics and age-related information. This was agreed.

DECIDED:

(a) That the report on absence statistics for the period 26 March to 24 June 2019 be noted; and

(b) That a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Board which included information used to generate the absence report including demographics and age-related information.

6 Audit, Risk & Scrutiny Board Annual Report 2018/19

There was submitted a report by the Director of Finance & Resources relative to the Board's 2018/19 annual report, prepared in terms of the Council's Code of Corporate Governance, which highlighted the issues considered by the Board during the period August 2018 to June 2019.

The report intimated that during the period, the Board examined different topics including the programme of reviews; training; audit related matters; and annual reports by other bodies.

DECIDED: That the Audit, Risk & Scrutiny Board Annual Report 2018/19 be noted.

7 Audit, Risk & Scrutiny Board Annual Programme - 2019/20

There was submitted a report by the Director of Finance & Resources relative to the Board's annual programme for 2019/20. The report intimated that in terms of the guidelines for its operation the Board was required to prepare an annual programme of activities.

The report advised that three of the reviews from the 2017/18 programme were completed during the 2018/19 programme, namely: fly-tipping in the countryside and known fly-tipping spots; housing repairs by Council and outside contractors; and the newly introduced speed limit in Brookfield (A761) and a report on the reserve topic of Japanese Knotweed had been submitted to the Board on 25 September 2018.

The report noted that at present three reviews were underway, namely: bus deregulation and its effect on transport services in Renfrewshire; maintenance of multi-occupancy accommodation; and the effectiveness of Fair Trade. At the meeting of the Audit, Risk & Scrutiny Board held on 6 November 2018, it was agreed that the 2018/19 programme also include an investigation of conversion of grassed areas to parking. No suggestions had been submitted for areas of investigation for the 2019/20 annual programme.

DECIDED: That the commencement of the reviews of bus deregulation and its effect on transport services in Renfrewshire; maintenance of multi-occupancy accommodation; the effectiveness of FairTrade; and conversion of grassed areas to parking form the Board's 2019/20 Annual Programme be noted.

8 Review of Bus Deregulation & Effect on Transport Services within Renfrewshire - Lead Officer Jamie Mackie

There was submitted a report by Jamie Mackie, Lead Officer relative to an update on the Review of Bus Deregulation and the Effect on Transport Services in Renfrewshire.

The report outlined the progress to date; existing and emerging legislation; key trends in bus services; deregulation; and the next steps.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the progress of the review be noted;
- (b) That the information presented at this stage of the review be noted; and
- (c) That the next steps of the review be noted.

9 The Effectiveness of Fair Trade within Renfrewshire - Lead Officer Craig Doogan

There was submitted a report by Craig Doogan, Lead Officer relative to an update on the review of the Effectiveness of Fair Trade within Renfrewshire.

The report outlined the progress to date; detailed the outcome of meetings with East Dunbartonshire Council and Just Trading Scotland; and outlined the next steps. A copy of East Dunbartonshire's Fair Trade Steering Group Communications Plan was attached as an appendix to the report.

DECIDED: That the progress of the review be noted.

10 Maintenance of Multi-Occupancy Accommodation (Mixed Tenure Buildings) - Lead Officer Dorothy Kerr

There was submitted a report by Dorothy Kerr, Lead Officer relative to an update on progress on the review of maintenance of multi-occupancy accommodation (mixed tenure buildings).

The report advised that meetings had taken place with officers from Communities, Housing and Planning Services and Legal Services in relation to the maintenance process of multi-occupancy accommodation within Renfrewshire. The report proposed that senior officers of the Council be invited to attend the next meeting of the Board to discuss the maintenance process of multi-occupancy accommodation (mixed tenure buildings) within Renfrewshire which would assist the Board in reaching conclusions on the review.

Benchmarking with North Lanarkshire Council had also taken place and it was noted that North Lanarkshire Council had a similar mix of housing stock to Renfrewshire

Council and the purpose of the meeting was to gain an understanding of their maintenance processes to discuss benchmarking standards and to explore examples of best practice.

The report noted that a Scottish Parliament working group review of the Maintenance of Tenement Scheme Property had recently been undertaken by a cross party group of MSPs and the final recommendations report was published in June 2019, a copy of which was attached as an appendix to the report.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the content of the report be noted;
- (b) That the next steps for the review process be agreed; and
- (c) That the attendance of relevant Council officers to the meeting of the Audit, Risk & Scrutiny Board on 23 September 2019 be agreed.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Board resolved that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of Item 11 as it was likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, that if members of the press and public were present, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part I of Schedule 7A of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

11 Summary of Exempt Internal Audit Reports for Period 1 May to 30 June 2019

- Information relating to any individual;