
To: Audit, Scrutiny & Petitions Board

On: 1 June 2015

Report by: Director of Finance and Resources

Heading: Audit, Scrutiny & Petitions Board – Annual Programme 2015/16

1. Summary

- 1.1 In terms of the guidelines for its operation, the Audit, Scrutiny & Petitions Board is required to prepare an annual programme of activities which may include consideration of routine reports as well as areas of specific investigation.
- 1.2 Generally, each review takes at least five meetings to conclude, but this is dependent upon the availability of witnesses and whether the Board wishes to hear further evidence. It was agreed at an earlier meeting that, given the level of business before the Board, no more than two reviews be considered at each meeting to allow members to give sufficient consideration to each one and in order that meetings were not extended too late into the afternoon.
- 1.3 The Board historically undertook 3-4 reviews each year based on there being two meetings per cycle. However there is now only one meeting per cycle and only five cycles each year, although there is the facility to hold additional meetings if required. This has an impact on the number of reviews which can be undertaken and the length of time taken to conclude each review.

1.4 At the meeting of the Board held on 2nd June, 2014 it was agreed that the 2014/15 annual programme comprise the following reviews and their order of priority: (i) the terms and conditions of a Renfrewshire Housing lease/contract in relation to the upkeep of Council property; (ii) communication between tenants, elected members and Development & Housing Services; (iii) the effectiveness of the 'Invest in Renfrewshire' programme; (iv) Ward 15 (Children's Ward) Royal Alexandra Hospital; and (v) bus deregulation and its effect on transport services in Renfrewshire.

1.5 Progress in relation to each of these reviews is set out below:

- (i) review of the terms and conditions of a Renfrewshire Housing lease/contract in relation to the upkeep of Council property - ongoing;
- (ii) review of communication between tenants, elected members and Development & Housing Services - at its meeting held on 30 March, 2015 the Board noted that since the initial proposal for the review, which had first been suggested as part of the 2012/13 programme, housing services had undergone many strategic service improvements including significant customer- focused improvements, particularly in the use of new technology. The Board therefore agreed that there was no empirical evidence that there was currently an issue with communication between tenants, elected members and housing services in relation to housing repairs.
- (iii) Invest in Renfrewshire programme – subsequent to the Board agreeing to undertake this review, the Council reviewed its decision making structure and established the Economy & Jobs Policy Board and Invest in Renfrewshire is monitored and reviewed in regular reports that are presented to this Board. This updates Members on activities, proposed changes and the services delivered through the Council's investment as well external funding secured to ensure that there is value for money and greatest impact.

In addition, a review by external consultants was carried out in 2013 and this was reported to the Economy & Jobs Board and it is suggested that a further commission will be called and reported to the Economy & Jobs Board in due course. As a result of this it is proposed that original purpose of this review has been overtaken and is no longer required.

- (iv) Ward 15 Royal Alexandra Hospital – not yet commenced.
- (v) Bus deregulation and its effect on transport services in Renfrewshire – not yet commenced.

- 1.6 Accordingly, unless members have any other areas they wish to propose for the Board's consideration, it is suggested that the 2015/16 programme comprise the reviews of (a) Ward 15 (Children's Ward) Royal Alexandra Hospital; and (b) bus deregulation and its effect on transport services in Renfrewshire.
- 1.7 Members were advised that this report would suggest that the 2015/16 programme comprise the two reviews which have yet to commence as detailed at paragraph 1.6 above, unless they had any other areas they wished to propose for the Board's consideration and were asked, when proposing issues for consideration, to provide details of why the review should be undertaken and the expected outcome of the proposed review.
- 1.8 Councillor James MacLaren has indicated that he would like the Board to include in its annual programme (a) review of Brookfield speed limit; (b) cycle to work scheme; (c) fly tipping; (d) housing repairs; (e) Japanese knotweed; and (f) multi-occupancy; and Councillor Jim Sharkey has asked that the effectiveness of Fair Trade be included.
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2. **Recommendations**

- 2.1 That members consider which issues they would wish the Board to consider for inclusion in its next annual programme of reviews, including the order of priority in which they are to be undertaken.
- 2.2 That lead officers be appointed to consider all of the topics and prepare reports outlining the possible scope and terms of reference of specific investigations and suggest individuals, agencies and organisations who might be invited to contribute to the investigations; and
- 2.3 That in relation to the review of the Invest in Renfrewshire programme, it be agreed that this falls within the remit of the Economy & Jobs Policy Board and that a review of this topic is no longer required in terms of the Board's annual programme of reviews.
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Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – *none*
2. **HR & Organisational Development** - *none*
3. **Community Planning** – the Board's annual programme reflects the Council's commitment to open and transparent government.
4. **Legal** - *none*

- 5. **Property/Assets** - *none*
- 6. **Information Technology** – *none*
- 7. **Equality & Human Rights**

(a) The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.

- 8. **Health & Safety** - *none*
- 9. **Procurement** – *none*
- 10. **Risk** - *none*
- 11. **Privacy Impact** - *none*

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