

Minute of Meeting Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board

Date	Time	Venue
Monday, 15 February 2016	10:00	CMR 1, Council Headquarters, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley, PA1 1AN

PRESENT

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

IN ATTENDANCE

A McMahon, Chief Auditor; D Amos, Head of Policy & Commissioning, N Irvine-Brown, Senior Policy Officer and D McLavin, Senior Communications Officer (all Chief Executive's); G McKinlay, Head of Schools and J Trainer, Acting Head of Early Years & Inclusion (both Children's Services); E Lorimer, Transportation Officer, D Kerr, Service Co-ordination Manager and A Summers, Amenity Services Manager (all Community Resources); P McLean, Senior Performance Review Officer (Development & Housing); A MacArthur, Head of Finance and A McNaughton, Senior Committee Services Officer (both Finance & Resources); and I Beattie, Head of Health & Social Care (Paisley) (Renfrewshire Health & Social Care Partnership).

CHAIR

Councillor J Sharkey, Convener, presided.

APOLOGY

Councillor Caldwell.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

1 INTERNAL AUDIT AND COUNTER FRAUD PROGRESS AND PERFORMANCE FOR PERIOD TO 31 DECEMBER 2015

There was submitted a report by the Chief Auditor relative to Internal Audit and Counter Fraud progress and performance for the period 1 April to 31 December 2015, in terms of the delivery of the audit plan.

The report compared the percentage of audit work completed against targets, within time and the percentage of audit reports issued within three weeks of completion of audit fieldwork. It was noted that performance was ahead of target in all but one area. The number of successful investigations and the level of overpayments identified by the Counter Fraud Team during the period were also reported together with progress against local and national initiative involving Internal Audit and the Counter Fraud Team including the National Fraud Initiative and the Scottish Local Authorities Chief Internal Auditors Group.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

2 SUMMARY OF INTERNAL AUDIT FINDINGS FOR QUARTER TO END OF DECEMBER 2015

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 this 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 October to 31 December 2015.

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 advice regularly to officers; provide Internal Audit services to the associated bodies for which Renfrewshire Council was the lead authority and to Renfrewshire Leisure Limited; co-ordinate the Council's corporate risk management activity; and manage the benefit investigation and insurance teams.

DECIDED: That the summary of audit findings reported during the quarter from 1 October to 31 December 2015 be noted.

3 TRAINING FOR AUDIT, SCRUTINY & PETITIONS BOARD MEMBERS

There was submitted a report by the Chief Auditor relative to training for Board members undertaken in line with guidance produced by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy on the implementation of Audit Committee principles in Scottish Local Authorities in terms of which training in audit and risk related matters was provided to members of the Board.

The current briefing, by the Chief Auditor, related to the risk of fraud from both within and outwith the Council and the mitigating factors in place to reduce this risk. Fraud was defined as 'obtaining an advantage by means of deception'. The briefing examined high-risk fraud situations; the opportunities, pressures, motivation and rationalisation used by those who committed fraud; and examined recent case studies involving forged documents, bribes and housing tenancy fraud. The role of the Counter Fraud Team was also explained and the results of a recent Counter Fraud Pilot to test of tenancy and Scottish Welfare Fund applications were provided.

DECIDED: That the report and briefing be noted.

4 **ANNUAL COMPLAINTS 2014/15**

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive relative to the annual complaints report 2014/15. The report advised that the Council's complaints handling procedure complied with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman's (SPSO) guidance on complaints handling and sought to resolve customer dissatisfaction as close as possible to the point of service delivery and to conduct thorough, impartial and fair investigations of customer complaints.

The report set out the stages of the complaints process and provided a summary of the numbers and types of complaints received, responded to within timescales, customer satisfaction monitoring and key complaint areas including what was being done to address issues raised. The Council had received 5,725 complaints in 2014/15 and the report identified how the information provided in complaints was used to improve services.

The appendix to the report detailed the Council's complaints handling performance during 2014/15 over a range of high-level performance indicators related to the SPSO complaints handling procedure.

It was noted that the 2014/15 value for the total number of complaints received per 1000 population was 3.34 and not 7.25 as detailed within the appendix.

DECIDED: That the report be noted

5 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT BENCHMARKING FRAMEWORK INDICATOR PROFILE 2014/15**

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive relative to the local government benchmarking framework indicator profile for 2014/15. It was noted that the Accounts Commission published an annual direction which set out the performance information that councils must report in each financial year. The direction for 2014/15 performance data covered three categories being corporate management, service performance and the local government benchmarking framework (LGBF).

The report intimated that during the year the Council published local performance information in board reports, key publications and on the website to demonstrate the delivery of best value in service arrangements. The validated LGBF data for 2014/15 was published by the Improvement Service on 29 January 2016. The report provided an analysis of the Council's LGBF data for 2014/15, compared the Council's performance to other councils, highlighted improvements in performance data and identified areas for further improvement. Of the 56 national indicators, since 2013/14, the Council's ranking in 28 had improved, one had remained the same, 22 had declined, and in five no trend information was available.

The report considered why certain indicators were ranked in the bottom quartile and where there was declining performance and detailed planned actions to improve performance, including learning from best practice in other authorities. Detailed analysis of the indicator suite was contained in the appendix to the report and it was noted that relation to 'ENV6 – the percentage of total waste arising that is recycled', the Scottish Average was 56.8% and not 42.86% as indicated.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

6 PETITION: ROAD SAFETY, SHORTROODS ROAD, PAISLEY

Under reference to item 7 of page 297 of the Minute of the meeting of the Board held on 30 November 2015, there was submitted a report by the Director of Finance & Resources relative to the petition on road safety at Shortroods Road, Paisley, submitted by Mr Haraburda. The Convener proposed that consideration of this petition be continued to the next meeting, at the petitioner's request, to allow him to attend. This was agreed.

DECIDED: That consideration of this petition be continued to the next meeting, at the petitioner's request, to allow him to attend.

Prior to consideration of the following item, the Convener welcomed Ms Brenda Dryburgh, petitioner, to the meeting.

7 PETITION: PEDESTRIAN CROSSING, CORSEBAR ROAD, PAISLEY

Under reference to item 9 of page 298 of the Minute of the meeting of the Board held on 30 November 2015, there was submitted a report by the Director of Finance & Resources relative to the Board's continued consideration of the petition which had been submitted in the undernoted terms:

"As I have become visually impaired and can no longer drive I have to access buses and also have to frequently attend clinics at the RAH. Trying to cross Corsebar Road is very difficult and dangerous, even for people who are elderly or disabled. I think there is an urgent need for a pedestrian crossing or even just a central island near the entrance to the RAH driveway".

The report intimated that, at its meeting on 30 November 2015, the Head of Amenity Services had advised that a vehicle and pedestrian survey had been carried out and the results did not justify the installation of pedestrian facilities. Thereafter, having heard the petitioner, the Board agreed that a further vehicle and pedestrian survey be undertaken; that a site visit be arranged for those members of the Board who wished to attend; and that the outcome be reported to a future meeting of the Board at which consideration of the petition would be resumed.

The site visit took place on 14 December 2015 and the Head of Amenity Services advised that a survey of the waiting time to cross Corsebar Road outside the Royal Alexandra Hospital (RAH) had been conducted from 7.00 am to 7.00 pm on 2 December 2015. Pedestrians had been observed over two lengths of Corsebar Road on either side of the entrance road to the hospital.

Analysis of the survey results had shown that in Zone 1 (to the north between the RAH entrance and Ricartsbar Avenue) the maximum waiting time was 48 seconds, the average wait was 18 seconds and in Zone 2 (to the south between the RAH entrance and Glencorse Road) the maximum waiting time was 55 seconds, the average wait was 15 seconds. The report indicated that the operational timings of a standard signalised puffin crossing included waiting times of between 26 and 66 seconds, which was on a par with the waiting times already experienced without a signalised crossing, and that there had been two slight injury accidents in the past three years close to the bus stops to the north of the hospital entrance. It was noted that these accidents did not involve pedestrians.

The Head of Amenity Services had concluded that pedestrians waiting to cross had not favoured one side of the hospital entrance over the other. A signalised crossing would not significantly reduce pedestrian waiting times. The injury record at the site did not justify an intervention and there was no observed justification for a signalised crossing based on pedestrian waiting times.

The Board heard from Ms Dryburgh in support of her petition and from the Transportation Officer.

It was noted that the location, together with the likelihood that pedestrians crossing at this site were infirm and required longer than average time to cross the road, presented exceptional circumstances. It was also noted that a pedestrian crossing had been installed in Stanley Road, which had significantly less traffic or pedestrians waiting to cross.

It was proposed that it be recommended to the Director of Community Resources: (a) that the rationale for the installation of a pedestrian crossing at Stanley Road be examined and compared against the Corsebar Road site; (b) that all factors be taken into account to make an exceptional case for a pedestrian crossing near the RAH entrance; and (c) that the options identified be reported to a future meeting of the Board when consideration of this matter would be resumed. This was agreed.

DECIDED: That it be recommended to the Director of Community Resources:

(a) that the rationale for the installation of a pedestrian crossing at Stanley Road be examined and compared against the Corsebar Road site;

(b) that all factors be taken into account to make an exceptional case for a pedestrian crossing near the RAH entrance; and

(c) that the options identified be reported to a future meeting of the Board when consideration of this matter would be resumed.