

Minute of Meeting Audit, Scrutiny and Petitions Board

Date	Time	Venue
Monday, 06 June 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 J MacLaren, McEwan, Perrie, and J Sharkey.

IN ATTENDANCE

P Holt, Communications Consultant (Chief Executive's); C Grainger, Service Planning & Policy Development Manager, Lead Officer and D McNab Transportation Manager (both Community Resources); A Bennett, Housing Services Manager (Development & Housing Services); L Belshaw, Democratic Services Manager, D Briggs, Senior Solicitor, Lead Officer, K Locke, Risk Manager, A McMahon, Chief Auditor and L Mullin, Principal OD & HR Adviser (all Finance & Resources)

CHAIR

Councillor J Sharkey, Convener, presided.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor J Sharkey declared an interest in item 7 of the agenda as he was a member of the KNOW (Kids Need Our Ward) Campaign.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

In terms of Standing Order 16, the Convener intimated that he proposed to alter the order of business to facilitate the conduct of the meeting by considering items 7 and 9 of the agenda after item 1.

1 INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT

There was submitted a report by the Chief Auditor relative to the annual report on the activities of the Council's Internal Audit section. The report intimated that the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) required the Chief Auditor to prepare a report at least annually to senior management and the Board on internal audit activity, purpose, authority and responsibility as well as performance relative to its plan. The annual report must also provide an annual audit opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's internal control environment and include details of any significant risk exposures and control issues including fraud, risks, governance issues and other matters that could be used to inform the governance statement. The annual report for 2015/16 was appended to the report and outlined the role of internal audit, its performance; the strategic and operational issues which influenced the nature of the work carried out, key findings and contained the annual audit assurance statement.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

Prior to consideration of the following item, the Convener welcomed Councillor M Macmillan, in his role as a member of the Greater Glasgow & Clyde Health Board, to the meeting.

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

Under reference to item 1 of the Minute of the special meeting of the Board held on 23 May 2016 there was submitted a report by the Lead Officer relative to the Board's review of Ward 15.

The report provided an update on progress of the review following the attendance at the meeting on 23 May 2016 by representatives of NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (NHSGGC), including details of the further information the representatives had agreed at that meeting to provide, and advised that Councillor Macmillan was in attendance at the meeting in relation to the Health Board's view as to the future of Ward 15 at the Royal Alexandra Hospital (RAH).

Councillor Macmillan indicated that he welcomed the opportunity to speak to the Board in terms of its review; referred to the meeting of the Health Board in March 2012 at which option 4 'maintain the current children's inpatient service at Ward 15 RAH until 2015 and then transfer inpatient services to the new Royal Hospital for Children, Glasgow' had been agreed as the preferred option; and also referred to the meeting of the Health Board to be held on 28 June 2016 at which he anticipated the Health Board's local delivery plan, including this option and also recommendations in relation to Lightburn Hospital, the community midwifery services at Vale of Leven and Inverclyde Royal, would be considered. He indicated however that the decision on the Health Board's local delivery plan was subject to approval by the Cabinet Secretary for Health. He referred to NHSGGC's £69 million budget deficit and to the cost pressures which had led to this. He emphasised his commitment to improved paediatric services at the RAH and across the Greater Glasgow & Clyde Health Board area.

There followed a question and answer session at the conclusion of which the Convener thanked Councillor Macmillan for his attendance at the meeting and his contribution to the Board's review.

It was noted that the Board's draft report and recommendations in relation to the review would be submitted to the meeting of the Board to be held on 19 September 2016. It was proposed that in addition to the further information that the representatives from NHSGGC had agreed to provide, copies of Minutes of Board meetings at which the options in relation to Ward 15 had been considered post March 2012 be obtained. This was agreed.

DECIDED:

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

(b) That, in addition to the further information that the representatives from NHSGGC had agreed to provide, copies of Minutes of Board meetings at which the options in relation to Ward 15 had been considered post March 2012 be obtained.

Prior to consideration of the following item, the Convener welcomed Mr Rollo, principal petitioner, to the meeting.

3 PETITION: INCHINNAN JUNCTION, A8 GREENOCK ROAD

Under reference to item 4 of the Minute of the meeting of the Board held on 25 January 2016 there was submitted a report by the Director of Finance & Resources relative to continued consideration of the petition by Mr Rollo, Secretary, Inchinnan Community Council.

It was noted that the Head of Amenity Services had indicated that in line with the guidelines for setting speed limits, and in consultation with the former Strathclyde Police, the Council had reduced the speed limit to 50 mph. Whilst the Council had desired a lower limit the police did not support this. The Transportation Manager met with Police Scotland and Inchinnan Community Council and following some accident investigation work and speed measurement, Police Scotland had indicated that they would not support a reduction to the speed limit. The report intimated, however, that funding of £510,000 from SPT was in place for improvements to the junction and that arrangements in relation to the tendering process were progressing.

The Board then heard from Mr Rollo in support of his petition and from the Transportation Manager who advised that tenders had been issued on 3 June 2016 and that, depending on the evaluation of the tenders received and the availability of the successful contractor, it was hoped that a site start could be made in August 2016.

It was proposed that, as the arrangements for the improvements to the junction were being progressed, no further action be taken in relation to the petition. This was agreed.

DECIDED: That, as the arrangements for the improvements to the junction were being progressed, no further action be taken in relation to the petition.

4 **RISK MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Finance & Resources relative to the risk management annual report 2015/16 which described the corporate risk management activity that had taken place during the year in relation to the Council's risk management arrangements and strategic risk management objectives.

The report intimated that in exceptionally challenging times and with diminishing resources, the Council continued to apply an appropriate level of risk management to prevent or mitigate the effects of loss or harm, in recognition that good risk management contributed to the delivery of better financial outcomes, business objectives, better project success rates, achievement of targets and fewer unexpected problems. The report highlighted that the Council promoted an environment that was risk aware rather than risk averse and strove to place risk management information at the heart of key decisions that the Council made, this meant that an effective approach to managing risk was taken in a way that both addressed significant challenges and enabled innovation.

It was noted that the Council had received national recognition for good risk management and had been shortlisted in two categories in 2016.

It was proposed that members be provided with further information in relation to the insurance arrangements for schools PPP. This was agreed.

DECIDED:

(a) That the annual report 2015/16, the continued effectiveness of the risk management framework in place, and the significant contribution that it made to the Council's corporate governance arrangements be noted; and

(b) That members be provided with further information in relation to the insurance arrangements for schools PPP.

5 **TRAINING FOR MEMBERS OF THE AUDIT, SCRUTINY AND PETITIONS BOARD**

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 on audit and risk related matters was provided to members of the Board. The current briefing related to risk management. The briefing, by the Risk Manager, referred to the corporate risks profile, the risk management framework and the new analysis tool, 'risk bow ties'.

DECIDED: That the briefing be noted.

6 **ABSENCE STATISTICS**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Finance & Resources relative to the Council's absence statistics for the period 23 June to 31 December 2015. 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 managing absence activity levels by service. The report intimated that the overall number of days lost per full time equivalent (FTE) employee was 9.5 for 2015/16, being a 0.5 increase on the previous year. The overall number of days lost during quarters 1 to 3 of 2015/16 and for the equivalent quarters in the previous year were shown.

It was proposed that members be provided with further information in relation to work-related stress and that, in the next report to the Board, comparative information for other Scottish local authorities in relation to their absence statistics be provided, if this was available. This was agreed.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the report be noted;
- (b) That members be provided with further information in relation to work-related stress; and
- (c) That in the next report to the Board, comparative information for other Scottish local authorities in relation to their absence statistics be provided, if this was available.

7 AUDIT, SCRUTINY AND PETITIONS BOARD ANNUAL PROGRAMME 2016/17

There was submitted a report by the Director of Finance & Resources relative to the Board's annual programme for 2016/17. The report intimated that in terms of the guidelines for its operation the Board was required to prepare an annual programme of activities. It was noted that the Board at its meeting held on 1 June 2015 had agreed its 2015/16 annual programme being: (i) Ward 15 (Children's Ward) Royal Alexandra Hospital; (ii) bus de-regulation and its effect on transport services in Renfrewshire; (iii) the newly introduced speed limit in Brookfield (A761); (iv) restricting access to the Council's cycle to work scheme; (v) fly tipping in the countryside and at known fly-tipping spots; (vi) housing repairs by Council and outside contractors; (vii) Japanese knotweed in our landscapes and gardens; (viii) maintenance of multi-occupancy accommodation; and (ix) the effectiveness of Fair Trade. To date only the review of Ward 15 (Children's Ward) Royal Alexandra Hospital had commenced. It was further noted that, given the business before the Board, no more than two reviews were considered at each meeting to allow members to give sufficient consideration to each one and that it generally took five meetings of the Board to conclude each review. It was highlighted that only four meetings remained prior to the May 2017 local government elections, although there was the potential to hold special meetings if required.

Councillor J MacLaren indicated that he had proposed the review of restricting access to the Council's cycle to work scheme and that he no longer wished this review to proceed.

It was proposed (a) that of the reviews agreed previously for the 2015/16 annual programme, only the reviews of (i) fly-tipping in the countryside and at known fly-tipping spots; and (ii) housing repairs by Council and outside contractors form the 2016/17 annual programme and that this be the order of priority in which they would be undertaken; (b) that lead officers be appointed to prepare reports outlining the possible scope and terms of reference of the reviews and suggest individuals, agencies and organisations who might be invited to contribute; (c) that the review of Japanese

knotweed in our landscapes and gardens be a reserve item in the event that either of the agreed two reviews did not proceed and that the Director of Community Resources provide the Board with a briefing paper on this matter; and (d) that, subject to the agreement of the incoming administration following the 2017 local government elections, the remaining outstanding reviews from the 2015/16 annual programme, and the proposed review by Councillor J MacLaren for the 2016/17 annual programme, as detailed in the report, be included as suggestions in the report to the Board for consideration as part of its 2017/18 annual programme. This was agreed.

DECIDED:

(a) That of the reviews agreed previously for the 2015/16 annual programme, only the reviews of (i) fly-tipping in the countryside and at known fly-tipping spots; and (ii) housing repairs by Council and outside contractors form the 2016/17 annual programme and that this be the order of priority in which they would be undertaken;

(b) That lead officers be appointed to prepare reports outlining the possible scope and terms of reference of the reviews and suggest individuals, agencies and organisations who might be invited to contribute;

(c) That the review of Japanese knotweed in our landscapes and gardens be a reserve item in the event that either of the agreed two reviews did not proceed and that the Director of Community Resources provide the Board with a briefing paper on this matter; and

(d) That, subject to the agreement of the incoming administration following the 2017 local government elections, the remaining outstanding reviews from the 2015/16 annual programme, and the proposed review by Councillor J MacLaren for the 2016/17 annual programme, as detailed in the report, be included as suggestions in the report to the Board for consideration as part of its 2017/18 annual programme.

8 REVIEW OF THE UPKEEP OF COMMON AREAS WITHIN COUNCIL HOUSING STOCK INCLUDING GARDEN AREAS (LEAD OFFICER DOROTHY BRIGGS)

Under reference to item 13 of the Minute of the meeting of the Board held on 21 September 2015, there was submitted a report by the Lead Officer attaching the Board's draft findings and recommendations relative to its review.

The purpose of the review was to consider how tenants complied with specific provisions within their Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement in relation to common areas in gardens, ensuring that the landlord could and would take appropriate action. The review considered potential options for ensuring that internal and external areas of Council housing stock were maintained and that tenants should be made aware of their obligations.

The report detailed the Board's findings, including the obligations of the tenancy agreement on both landlord and tenant; highlighted the two assistance schemes provided to those tenants who were unable to adhere to their obligations; action taken if a tenant breached the terms of their tenancy agreement; the multi-tenure nature of housing estates within Renfrewshire which contributed to the overall appearance and conditions within estates, with Council ownership often being in the minority; registration of private landlords; and evidence taken from witnesses including housing associations, tenant representatives and Council services.

The report, whilst making a number of recommendations, concluded that there was no evidence to support the view that Housing Services were failing to advise Council tenants of their obligations under their tenancy agreement or to address any issues raised with them which fell to be dealt with under the Council's estate management procedures.

DECIDED:

(a) That the Board's thanks be conveyed to the Lead Officer and to those who had contributed to the review; and

(b) That the report on the upkeep of common areas within Council housing stock, including garden areas, be approved and that the report be submitted to the Council for its consideration.

9 PETITION: TIREE AVENUE, RENFREW

Under reference to item 10 of the Minute of the meeting of the Board held on 21 September 2015 there was submitted a report by the Director of Finance & Resources relative to a petition by Ms J Campbell requesting speed bumps in Tiree Avenue, Renfrew.

There was no appearance by or on behalf of Ms Campbell and it was proposed that consideration of the petition be continued to the meeting of the Board to be held on 19 September 2016. This was agreed.

DECIDED: That consideration of the petition be continued to the meeting of the Board to be held on 19 September 2016.