

## Minute of Meeting Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board

Date	Time	Venue
Monday, 21 August 2023	15:00	Council Chambers (Renfrewshire), Council Headquarters, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley, PA1 1AN

**Present:** Councillor Andy Doig, Councillor Chris Gilmour, Councillor John Gray, Councillor Lisa-Marie Hughes, Councillor Robert Innes, Councillor Janis McDonald, Councillor Kevin Montgomery

### In Attendance

A MacArthur, Director of Finance & Resources; L McIntyre, Head of Policy & Partnerships, L Fingland, Service Planning & Policy Development Manager and L McGuinness, Communications Business Lead (Transformation) (all Chief Executive's); G Hutton, Head of Operations & Service Development and C Dalrymple, Head of Head of Facilities & Property Services (both Environment, Housing & Infrastructure); J Calder, Head of Early Years & Broad General Education (Children's Services); C McCourt, Head of Finance & Procurement, M Boyd, Head of People & Organisational Development, M Conaghan, Head of Corporate Governance, A McMahon, Chief Auditor, K Campbell, Assistant Chief Auditor, P Feeney, Architecture & Technology Manager, S Fanning, Principal HR & OD Adviser, A Black, Managing Solicitor (DPO), D Pole, End User Technician, D Low, Democratic Services Manager and C McDonald, Senior Committee Services Officer and D Cunningham, Assistant Committee Services Officer (all Finance & Resources).

### Also in Attendance

G Devlin, Partner & National Head of Internal Audit (Azets).

### Webcasting of Meeting

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Convener intimated that this meeting of the Board would be filmed for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's internet site.

## **Apology**

Councillor J Adam.

## **Declarations of Interest and Transparency Statements**

There were no declarations of interest or transparency statements made prior to the commencement of the meeting.

### **1 Summary of Internal Audit Reports for period 01 April to 30 June 2023**

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, 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 April to 30 June 2023.

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 and Renfrewshire Health & Social Care Integration Joint Board, co-ordination of the Council's Corporate Risk Management activity and management of the counter fraud, risk management and insurance team.

**DECIDED:** That the summary of Internal Audit findings report for the period 1 April to 30 June 2023 be noted.

### **2 Internal Audit and Counter Fraud Progress and Performance for Period to 30 June 2023**

There was submitted a report by the Chief Auditor relative to Internal Audit and Counter Fraud performance between 1 April and 30 June 2023 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 and the Service Level Agreement for the work contained time targets for completing this work. It was noted that 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 in the period.

The report advised that the Internal Audit Team and the Counter Fraud Team were currently working on a hybrid basis and were undertaking home/site visits when the need arose.

**DECIDED:** That the Internal Audit and Counter Fraud Team progress and performance from 1 April to 30 June 2023 be noted.

### 3 **2022/23 Complaints Handling Performance**

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive relative to the annual complaints report 2022/23.

The report intimated that the Council's complaint-handling procedure aimed to have quicker, simpler and more streamlined complaints handling with early response by capable, well-trained staff. As part of the procedure, all complaints were recorded and monitored.

The report provided information on complaints closed during the year from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 and performance on key indicators and highlighted improvements made to the complaints handling procedure over the past year to ensure that complaints were handled well, and the organisation learned from them and improved services.

It was noted that 9,155 complaints were received in 2022/23 compared with 9,193 in 2021/22; 88.3% of the complaints were dealt with as frontline responses; 83.8% of frontline complaints and 89.5% of investigation complaints received were completed within target timescales; the average time to respond to frontline complaints met the target of 4 days and was an improvement from the previous year figure of 5 days. The average time to respond to an investigation was 14 days, an improvement on the 2021/22 figure of 16.5 days, though this was still well within the SPSO target of 20 days. The 2022/23 breakdown of complaints received by services continued to be broadly reflective of the volume of services provided with Environment and Infrastructure delivering the highest volume and widest scope of frontline Council services and consequently having the highest volume of customer interactions.

A performance scorecard was included within the appendix to the report to provide additional data. It was noted that all indicators would continue to be monitored regularly and support and guidance would be provided to all services to assist with analysing and improving performance where required.

**DECIDED:** That the report be noted.

#### 4 **Audit Scotland - Local Government in Scotland - Overview 2023**

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive relative to Audit Scotland's report on behalf of the Accounts Commission, a copy of which was appended to the report.

The report identified five key challenges for local government in Scotland – financial sustainability, community needs, collaboration, leadership and workforce. Each of the key themes were considered in respect of the impact of the pandemic, the current challenges, and how councils were responding. A number of case studies were included to show how different councils dealt with the many challenges arising.

**DECIDED:**

(a) That the contents of the report be noted; and

(b) That the contents of the Audit Scotland Overview which was appended to the report be noted.

#### 5 **Absence Statistics – Annual report 22/23 and Quarter 1 of 23/24**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Finance & Resources relative to the Absence Statistics annual report and the Council's absence statistics for quarter 1 of 2023/24 ending 30 June 2023.

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.

**DECIDED:** That the report be noted.

#### 6 **Audit, Risk & Scrutiny Annual Report 2022/23 and Annual Programme 2022/23 - 2023/24**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Finance & Resources relative to the Board's 2022/23 Annual Report and the Annual Programme 2023/24. The Annual Report was prepared in terms of the Council's Code of Corporate Governance, which highlighted the issues considered by the Board during the period August 2022 to June 2023.

The report intimated that during the period, the Board examined different topics including the programme of reviews; audit related matters; and annual reports by other bodies. The report advised that in terms of the guidelines for the operation of the Annual Programme, the Board was required to prepare an annual programme of activities. It was noted that the Bulk Items review was currently ongoing but the Neighbour Disputes review had paused due to the Lead Officer leaving his post and an exercise was currently underway to find a replacement Lead Officer.

The report proposed that four reviews go forward as part of the Annual Programme of Reviews for 2023/24 namely: charges for bulk items; neighbour disputes; lack of house and garden maintenance by some tenants and residents; and lead piping in public and private housing in Renfrewshire. It was agreed that these reviews be included in the 2023/24 programme.

**DECIDED:**

(a) That the Audit, Risk & Scrutiny Board Annual Report 2022/23 be noted;

(b) That it be agreed that four reviews go forward as part of the Annual Programme of Reviews for 2023/24 namely: charges for bulk items uplift for the elderly; neighbour disputes; lack of house and garden maintenance by some tenants and residents; and lead piping in public and private housing in Renfrewshire.