

## Minute of Meeting Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Board

Date	Time	Venue
Monday, 23 August 2021	10:00	Council Chambers (Renfrewshire), Council Headquarters, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley, PA1 1AN

**Present:** Councillor Tom Begg, Councillor Bill Binks, Councillor Stephen Burns, Councillor Michelle Campbell, Councillor Jim Harte, Councillor John Hood, Councillor Emma Rodden, Councillor Jim Sharkey

### Chair

Councillor Bill Binks, Convener, presided.

### In Attendance

A Morrison, Head of Economy & Development Services and N Irvine-Brown, Policy Lead, Performance & Quality (both Chief Executive's); A McMahon, Chief Auditor, C McCourt, Finance Business Partner, S Fanning, Principal HR and OD Adviser, D Head, End User Technician, M Conaghan, Legal & Democratic Services Manager, A McNaughton, E Currie, E Gray and C MacDonald, all Senior Committee Services Officers (all Finance & Resources).

### Also in Attendance

M Ferris, Audit Scotland.

### Apology

Councillor Strang.

## **Recording**

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Convener intimated that this meeting of the Board would be webcast live on the Council's website and outlined the rules to be followed by participants at a hybrid meeting.

Thereafter the Clerk took a roll call of members in attendance at the meeting, indicating those in the Council Chamber and those participating remotely.

## **Declaration of interest**

Councillor Campbell declared an interest in respect of Item 4 of the agenda as she was an employee of NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde but not in the Council's area and intimated that it was her intention to remain in the meeting and to take part in any discussion or voting thereon.

### **1 Summary of Internal Audit Reports for period 1 May 2021 to 30 June 2021**

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 2021.

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 and 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 Audit findings report for the period 1 May to 30 June 2021 be noted.

### **2 Internal Audit and Counter Fraud Progress and Performance for Period to 30 June 2021**

There was submitted a report by the Chief Auditor relative to Internal Audit and Counter Fraud performance between 1 April and 30 June 2021 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 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 in the period.

The report advised that as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the majority of fraud investigation work had temporarily ceased and a date was awaited for this work to recommence. All of the Counter Fraud Team were currently working from home.

It was noted that the Internal Audit team was also working from home full-time and continued to work on planned audit assignments. The team was also providing advice and support where necessary to Council services.

**DECIDED:** That the Internal Audit and Counter Fraud Team progress and performance from 1 April to 30 June 2021 be noted.

### **3 Internal Audit Charter**

There was submitted a report by the Chief Auditor relative to the new Internal Audit Charter which was attached as an appendix to the report.

The report advised that it was last updated in August 2017 and had now been amended to take account of the dissolution of Clyde Muirshiel Park Authority.

**DECIDED:** That the Internal Audit Charter be approved.

### **Declaration of Interest**

Councillor Campbell, having previously declared an interest in the following item of business remained in the meeting.

### **4 Accounts Commission - Local Government in Scotland Overview**

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

The report covered the initial response phase of the pandemic from March 2020, and included financial data correct as at the end of February 2021. It provided an analysis of the local government response to the pandemic and the wider risks that had emerged under the following themes: community and people; service delivery and partnership working; and resources and governance. Each section set out the key messages, provided case study examples of council responses to the new challenges

and included lessons learned for the sector.

The report also outlined the key messages and lessons learned by Audit Scotland along with the summary position for Renfrewshire.

**DECIDED:**

- (a) That the key messages contained in Audit Scotland's - 'Local Government in Scotland: Overview 2021 report, attached as an appendix to the report, be noted; and
- (b) That Renfrewshire Council's position in relation to the key messages and seven lessons learned as set out in the Audit Scotland report be noted.

**5     Audit, Risk & Scrutiny Board Annual Report 2020/21 And Annual Programme 2021/22**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Finance & Resources relative to the Board's 2020/21 Annual Report and the Annual Programme 2021/22.

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 2020 to June 2021. 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 operation the Board was required to prepare an annual programme of activities. It was noted that no suggestion for areas of investigation had been submitted.

The report intimated that one of the reviews from the 2020/21 programme was completed, namely: the conversion of grassed areas to parking review which had been submitted to Council on 17 December 2020. The final report on de-regulation of buses had been presented to the Board on 16 March 2020 but was continued for further information. However, given the situation with Covid-19, it was agreed that the review be now paused to allow future consideration of the impact of the pandemic on bus services within Renfrewshire. It was anticipated that the final report for the de-regulation of buses would be presented to the Board at a future meeting.

**DECIDED:**

- (a) That the Audit, Risk & Scrutiny Board Annual Report 2020/21 be noted; and
- (b) That the Audit, Risk & Scrutiny Board Annual Programme be noted.

**6     Absence Statistics - Quarters 1 and 2 of 2021/22**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Finance & Resources relative to the Council's absence statistics for 2020/21 and for Quarter 1 of 2021/22.

The report provided information in relation to absence statistics broken down by service and category of staff; reasons for absence broken down by service and

category of staff; and progress made by services in relation to their supporting attendance action plans.

**DECIDED:** That the report on absence statistics for Quarter 1 2021/22 be noted.

## **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

The Board resolved that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of Item 6 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.

### **7 Summary of Internal Audit Investigation Reports for period 01 May to 30 June 2021**

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 reported on the findings and conclusions of audit engagements to the Board. The appendix to the report provided a summary of the findings of four internal audit investigations.

**DECIDED:** That the summary of Audit Reports finalised during the period from 1 May to 30 June 2021 be noted.