

CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY PLANNING
STANDING SCRUTINY PANEL.

Minutes of meeting in County Buildings, Wellington Square, Ayr,
on 21st January 2010 at 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillors Bill Grant (Chair), Sandra Goldie, John Hampton, Mairi Low, Helen Moonie, Alec Oattes and Mike Peddie.

Apology: Councillor Brian Connolly.

Attending: E. Howat, Executive Director – Corporate Services; C. Monaghan, Head of Policy, Performance and Communication; H. McLaughlin, Audit Services/Programme Review Manager; D. Sherlock, Improvement Manager; A. MacLeod, Business and Performance Manager; and E. Wyllie, Committee Administration Officer.

Also Attending: Councillor Bill McIntosh (Portfolio-holder of Resources and Performance).

In the absence of the Chair, Councillor Grant took the chair and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. Minutes of previous meeting.

Decided: to note the Minutes of the previous meeting of 3rd December 2009 (issued).

AUDIT FUNCTION:-

2. Internal Audit Service – Annual Audit Plan 2009/10 – Progress Report.

With reference to the Minutes of 28th May 2009 (Page 312, paragraph 3), there was submitted a report (issued) of January 2010 by the Audit Services/Programme Review Manager advising

- (1) of the progress and current position of the annual Audit Plan from 1st June to 24th December 2009 and outlining the productivity of the section; and
- (2) that a summary progress report showing actual activity, on a line by line basis against the original Audit Plan, was attached as an Appendix to the report.

A question was raised by a Member of the Panel in relation to the current staffing position within the Internal Audit section and the Audit Services/Programme Review Manager responded accordingly.

Decided:

- (a) to note the progress of the Annual Audit Plan for 2009/10; and
- (b) to request that the Audit Services/Programme Review Manager submit similar reports to future meetings of this Panel.

3. **Internal Audit Service – Follow-up of Internal Audit Reports – Progress Report.**

There was submitted a report (issued) of January 2010 by the Audit Services/Programme Review Manager

- (1) advising of the current status of Departmental progress regarding the implementation of Action Plans contained within internal audit reports;
- (2) referring to the meeting of 26th March 2009 when it had been agreed that Directorates should submit written reports to future meetings of this Panel explaining the reason for requesting second or subsequent extensions of time to complete outstanding action plan points;
- (3) informing that, as at the cut-off date of 8th January 2010, four action plan points were outstanding as noted in CPMS and outlining that all of these were ongoing actions, i.e. continuous checks with no final dates; and
- (4) intimating that since the previous meeting of this Panel, nine reports had been issued and that a summary of these reports had been included as Appendices to the report.

Various questions were raised by Members of the Panel in relation to the Continuous Audit and the Golf Course Management summaries and a full discussion took place on both of these matters.

The Executive Director – Corporate Services and the Audit Services/Programme Review Manager:-

- (a) suggested, in relation to the Continuous Audit summary, ways in which Members could further investigate this subject matter; and
- (b) advised that, in respect of the Golf Course Management summary, for the purpose of this exercise, Internal Audit had only focussed on the processes involved and that the appropriate Directorate was currently undertaking a review of golf as approved by the Council.

A further discussion took place on both issues when it was suggested that a Special Meeting of the Panel be arranged to further consider the detail of the Continuous Audit findings and that the appropriate officer be invited to attend a future meeting to discuss the Golf Course Management summary.

Members were reminded that they should take the opportunity to raise any concerns around internal audit reports outwith the Panel meetings directly with the relevant officers or the Audit Services/Programme Review Manager.

The Executive Director – Corporate Services suggested that it might be appropriate for relevant officers to attend the Panel meeting to discuss specific concerns in respect of the audit recommendations.

Decided:

- (i) that a Special Meeting of this Panel be arranged to take place as soon as possible to further discuss issues relating to the Continuous Audit summary with an expectation that the three Executive Directors, as well as the Audit Services/Programme Review Manager, be in attendance;

- (ii) that the Head of Community Development be invited to attend the next scheduled meeting of this Panel to discuss the Golf Course Management summary;
- (iii) to welcome the mechanism whereby Members would contact the Executive Director – Corporate Services prior to meetings of this Panel should they require an appropriate officer in attendance to respond to specific questions on any particular summary sheet; and
- (iv) otherwise, to note the progress of Directorates in the implementation of agreed action plan findings and to request that the Audit Services/Programme Review Manager submit reports to future meetings of this Panel.

WIDER SCRUTINY PANEL BUSINESS:-

4. Improvement Agenda Strand 3: Leadership Capacity.

With reference to the Minutes of 3rd December 2009 (Page 671, paragraph 4(2)), there was submitted a report (issued) of January 2010 by the Head of Policy, Performance and Communication

- (1) providing a brief update on how Improvement Strand 3, which related to Leadership Capacity, would be taken forward; and
- (2) advising that, in addition to continued activity to support improved leadership capacity, key priorities going forward would include:-
 - (a) embedding ownership of change throughout the organisation supported by strong, effective communication; and
 - (b) using the performance management systems and processes to support continuous improvement.

Various questions and comments were raised by Members of the Panel in relation to:- a repeated individual request to attend Adaptive Leadership training; whether the views from the employee conversations had been fully reflected within this paper; the report format which did not invite Members to undertake scrutiny; criteria measurement and succession planning issues; and whether Leadership Capacity was more of an HR function.

The Head of Policy, Performance and Communication responded accordingly on the various issues raised and advised that she welcomed suggestions from Members on a preferred style of reporting for future strands. She also indicated that the Employee Opinion survey would be undertaken in the Spring of this year and that an action plan would be produced from the findings thereafter.

A full discussion took place in relation to Adaptive Leadership training and the Head of Policy, Performance and Communication indicated that she would provide the Member with a written response on this matter.

Decided: to note the progress in relation to Improvement Strand 3 – Leadership Capacity.

5. Panel Work Programme.

(1) Project Management Working Group.

There was submitted a report (issued) of 12th January 2010 by the Executive Director – Corporate Services

- (a) providing an update on the work of the Sub-Group; and
- (b) advising that the Appendix attached to the report outlined the work which had been undertaken and which concluded that the current arrangements for managing and monitoring the Capital Programme were satisfactory.

Some Members of the Sub-Group commented that they had found this a worthwhile exercise.

Decided: to note the review which had been undertaken and to agree that no further work was required as the current arrangements for managing and monitoring the capital programme were satisfactory.

(2) Role of the Audit Panel Working Group.

Councillor Peddie gave an update on the current position with the Working Group and

- (a) indicated that two meetings had taken place resulting in a provisional list (tabled) of topics highlighting potential weaknesses which he had emailed to Members of the Panel;
- (b) intimated that he wished to discuss these areas further with Members of the Working Group, as well as with all Members of the Panel; and
- (c) suggested that an informal meeting should also take place with Internal and External Auditors.

Decided: following discussion, to note the current position and to welcome the approach outlined at (b) and (c) above.

The meeting ended at 11.10 a.m.