

CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY PLANNING
STANDING SCRUTINY PANEL.

Minutes of meeting in County Buildings, Wellington Square, Ayr,
on 3rd November 2011 at 10.00 a.m.

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

Apology: Councillor Mairi Low.

Attending: E. Howat, Executive Director – Corporate Services; V. Andrews, Head of Legal and Administration; H. McLaughlin, Audit Services / Programme Review Manager; D. Alexander, Head of Corporate Resources; M. Newall, Head of Planning and Enterprise; R. Howe, Fleet Manager; P. Linton, Performance and Change Management Manager; C. Coombs, Sports, Leisure, Libraries, Art and Culture Manager; C. Gardner, Senior Strategic Planning and Performance Management Officer; S. Gilchrist, Team Leader; G. Boyce, Service Planning and Performance Management Officer; and E. Wyllie, Committee Administration Officer.

Also Attending: Councillor Bill McIntosh (Portfolio-holder).

1. Item for Call-in.

The Panel noted that there had been no call-ins for this meeting.

2. Minutes of previous meeting.

Decided: to note the Minutes of the previous meeting of 22nd September 2011 (issued).

AUDIT FUNCTION:-

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

There was submitted a report (issued) of October 2011 by the Audit Services / Programme Review Manager

- (1) advising of the current status of Directorate progress regarding the implementation of Action Plans contained within internal audit reports;
- (2) informing that, as at 21st October 2011, CPMS was showing five Action Plan points, due to be implemented by 30th September 2011, which were still outstanding and reporting that extension requests had been agreed by Internal Audit for all of these actions; and
- (3) intimating that since the previous meeting of this Panel, six reports had been issued and that that a summary of these reports, excluding those for Community Councils, had been included as Appendices to the report.

The Audit Services / Programme Review Manager reported that, following this report being issued, three Action Plan points had now been dealt with, one was awaiting the outcome of investigations and the other, relating to Treasury Management, should be finished by the end of October 2011.

Questions were raised by a Member of the Panel in relation to:- the Statutory Performance Indicators' summary sheet with regards to the three medium risks contained therein; and the Troon Golf Course summary sheet, the issuing of golf insurance cards and whether insurance could be incorporated within a single ticket and the Audit Services / Programme Review Manager responded accordingly.

Decided:

- (a) to note the progress of Directorates in the implementation of agreed Action Plan findings; and
- (b) to request the Audit Services / Programme Review Manager to submit agreed reports to future meetings of this Panel.

4. Internal Audit Service - Annual Audit Plan 2011/12 – Progress Report.

Reference was made to the Minutes of 26th May 2011 (Page 350, paragraph 3) when the Annual Audit Plan for 2011/12 had been approved and there was submitted a report (issued) of October 2011 by the Audit Services / Programme Review Manager advising

- (1) of the progress and current position of this Plan from 1st June to 6th October 2011 and outlining the productivity of the section;
- (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;
- (3) that, so far this year, Internal Audit staff had continued to be heavily involved in investigation work with this ongoing commitment requiring staff to be diverted from working directly on areas in the Audit Plan and reporting that this might impact on the time available for the 2011/12 Annual Plan; and
- (4) that, should this be a significant impact, the Annual Plan would be amended to ensure that sufficient work was carried out on the main core systems section of the Audit Plan to ensure that an annual assurance statement could be provided with Members being advised of any such amendments to the Plan.

Decided:

- (a) to note the progress being made with the Annual Audit Plan; and
- (b) to request the Audit Services / Programme Review Manager to provide similar reports to future meetings of this Panel.

5. **Follow Up Data Management Audit.**

There was submitted a report (issued) of 26th October 2011 by the Head of Policy, Performance and Communication

- (1) advising Members of the findings from a follow-up review of data management within the Council;
- (2) reporting that the main objectives of the follow-up audit were:-
 - (a) to confirm that agreed actions had been implemented; and
 - (b) to agree revised timescales for actions where there had been slippage in implementation;
- (3) highlighting that the Auditors recognised that the Council had completed two of the five actions outlined in the data management report with three of the outstanding actions linked to the implementation of the information asset register, which had to be completed; and
- (4) informing that the Action Plan detailed the issues and risks, together with the Council's response and target dates by which the issues would be addressed.

The Executive Director – Corporate Services advised that, although unable to attend this meeting, the External Auditors were satisfied with the proposed course of action outlined within the Appendix to the report. She particularly commented on the Information Asset Register and advised that Officers were currently exploring the system used by North Ayrshire Council. Various questions were raised by Members of the Panel in relation to:- whether any fees would be incurred with regards to this matter; and whether Officers' names could be added to their designation for ease of reference and the Executive Director – Corporate Services responded accordingly and intimated that she would add Officers' names into the document.

Decided:

- (i) to note the key issues raised by the Auditors;
- (ii) to agree the Action Plan proposed at Appendix 1 of the report; and
- (iii) to agree that progress in implementing the Action Plan would be reported to this Panel as part of the review of External Audit Reports.

6. **Role of Audit Committee.**

Reference was made to the Minutes of 22nd September 2011 (page 590, paragraph 9) when the Panel agreed that this matter be continued to this meeting and there was submitted a report (issued) of 15th September 2011 by the Executive Director – Corporate Services

- (1) seeking approval of the proposals from the Role of the Audit Panel Working Group;
- (2) informing that the Working Group had focussed on the following three key issues:-
 - (a) the need for a better understanding of the Standing Orders relating to the audit function, to consider practices in other Councils;

- (b) that the Audit Panel function should be more clearly set apart from the wider scrutiny business of the Panel; and
 - (c) the development of a tracking mechanism to all issues raised at meetings to be actioned and the progress monitored;
- (3) reporting that (2)(b) and (c) above had already been addressed through the structuring of the agenda and the regular review of both internal and external audit actions;
 - (4) advising that the Working Group had developed an Audit Committee Handbook, attached as Appendix 1 of the report and recommending that this now be submitted to a future meeting of the Leadership Panel for formal approval; and
 - (5) proposing that any required revisions to the Scheme of Delegation were progressed by the Executive Director – Corporate Services as part of the next review.

The Executive Director – Corporate Services commented that the draft Handbook was still to be completed with regard to its Constitution and those Members ineligible to sit on the Audit Committee. Following discussion, it was intimated that Members of the Leadership Panel should not be eligible to serve on such a Committee and the Head of Legal and Administration suggested that she could update accordingly as well as generally review the content of the Handbook.

Various questions were raised by Members of the Panel in relation to:- the proposed Audit Committee function and whether that part of the document pertaining to conduct and ethical standards fell within its remit; and whether there should be a review date following implementation of the Handbook. The Executive Director - Corporate Services commented on annual review processes currently in place for other such like documents and the Head of Legal and Administration suggested that the reference to conduct and ethical standards be removed as this function sat within the remit of the Scrutiny and Governance Management Panel.

The Chair commented on the dual purpose of this Panel and the clear roles between its Audit and Scrutiny functions. He also requested that the Head of Legal and Administration should circulate the revised Handbook to Panel Members, based on the discussion at this meeting, prior to it being submitted to the Leadership Panel.

A general discussion took place in relation to the role of Members and the mechanisms in place to report concerns and whether there was an opportunity for an improved process between Members/Officers which would effectively monitor and track outcomes. The Executive Director – Corporate Services advised that, although this did not fall under the remit of this Panel, it was an area that could be reviewed and subsequently reported to the appropriate Panel.

Decided: having thanked Councillor Peddie and the Audit Services / Programme Review Manager for their input into the preparation of this document

- (i) to approve the contents of the Audit Committee Handbook, attached as Appendix 1 of the report, subject to amendment as agreed at this meeting;
- (ii) to note that, on this basis, the Head of Legal and Administration would revise the Handbook and circulate to Panel Members and thereafter it would be referred to the Leadership Panel for formal approval; and
- (iii) to request Officers to update the Scheme of Delegation accordingly subject to Leadership Panel approval with the Handbook subject to annual review thereafter.

WIDER SCRUTINY PANEL BUSINESS:-

7. Strategic Risk Management.

There was submitted a report (issued) of 25th October 2011 by the Executive Director - Corporate Services

- (1) providing an update on the reviewed Strategic Risk Register – October 2011, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report, in line with the agreed reporting framework; and
- (2) advising that, following updates from the risk owners in relation to the seventeen risk themes, key points had been highlighted as detailed within the report.

Various questions were raised by Members of the Panel in relation to:- the attendance rate of Members at the recently held Risk Management Awareness Session; and the risk owners and the Head of Corporate Resources responded accordingly.

Decided: to agree

- (a) the seventeen key risks and to endorse the work currently being undertaken or proposed by risk owners to mitigate these risks; and
- (b) that a report on the management of Strategic Risk be submitted to the next meeting of the Leadership Panel on 22nd November 2011 for endorsement.

8. Progress Against the Council Corporate Plan to 30th September 2011.

There was submitted a report (issued) of 18th October 2011 by the Head of Policy, Performance and Communication outlining the progress which had been achieved to date against the Council Corporate Plan in relation to the Directorate objectives and tasks which had fallen within this Panel's remit.

The Performance and Change Management Manager referred to the recently held workshop when those Panel Members present had made various points in respect of specific indicators as follows:-

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| CCD10.01 | review, develop and deliver transport arrangements for schools with an update requested in relation to the forthcoming review of school transport arrangements; |
| CCD15.04 | implement a review of Community Development with a request for information on the options being considered for the library service as part of this review; |
| DECSCS001 | development of Customer Service Centres and whether a location had been found for the Maybole Centre; |
| DECSRBA013 | further update requested on the progress of identifying an appropriate multi-purpose facility to include archives, registration and other related services; |
| DEPL010 | progress access work: Core Path Plan and the current position with filling the vacant Access Officer post; |
| DEDM002 | further update requested on the review of shared services for roads; |

- CCD08.02 develop opportunities for the local community to influence decision-making through identifying work priorities for offenders and what screening methods would be used for offenders who might be undertaking work in people's homes as part of the project;
- DECSRBA008 further update requested on the implementation and delivery of the 'Tell us Once' system to improve information sharing across the Council and Government agencies;
- CCD10.09 develop and implement a comprehensive performance reporting schedule within Children and Community and why were requirements being placed on the Council to provide information for the Scottish Government;
- CCD10.11 develop and maintain management information systems to support delivery and improvement of services within Children and Community and queried the range of management systems;
- DEDM003 further update requested on the development within the Development and Environment Directorate's training plan;
- DEDSU013 further update requested on the implementation of Oracle across the Development and Environment Directorate;
- CCD10.15 develop and implement an investment strategy for the modernisation of the school estate and the replacement cost of a dining/gym hall at Annbank Primary School being queried and whether other options had been explored;
- CS14f01.04 implement ICT related projects in line with business objectives to support the delivery of service improvement plans and a request for further information on the 'Shorelines Symposium booking system' and clarification sought on the arrangements for selling tickets at the Citadel;
- CS14f01.07 further update requested on the implementation of Purchase-to-pay (P2P) across all Council services
- CS14f01.08 further update requested on the retirement of the Council's CFACS accounting system;
- CS14f08.01 further update requested on the periodic review of all administrative services to ensure continued efficiency;
- CS14f09.02 further update requested on the provision of democratic election services and on the progress with statutory comprehensive review of polling arrangements;
- CS14f09.03 support Children's Panel and Safeguarders and details requested on the set up of this Panel;
- CS14f10.13 provision of a central cashiers' service and co-ordination of cash collection across all Council Directorates and locations and whether Maybole Golf Course was now live with 'paye-net';
- DEFL007 further update requested on the centralised Fleet Management task; and
- DENS016 further update requested on the implementation of Neighbourhood Service Modernisation.

The Chair referred to the workshop handout (tabled) which listed the above tasks in conjunction with Officers' responses and suggested that the Panel worked through this document.

Thereon, Members of the Panel made various points in relation to:- the need to consult with library user groups; the need for clarity around the Customer Service Centres in terms of service delivery and staffing; the re-location of the Archives and linkages with the Asset Management Plan; the Access Officer post vacancy and the impact on the Core Path Plan; the review of shared services – Roads and on the potential for savings; the self-assessment tool being utilised within Children and Community for performance reporting; the costs associated with the replacement for the dining/gym hall at Annbank Primary School; whether the process for selling tickets at the Citadel could be simplified; and the current position with a centralised Fleet Management service, vehicle tracking issues and opportunities for low emission vehicles. Various Officers responded accordingly and intimated that further information would be circulated to Panel Members on:-

- the details of the Maybole Customer Services Centre;
- the outcome of the meeting regarding the relocation of the archives service;
- the justification for the filling of the Access Officer post;
- details of the self evaluation work within Children and Community; and
- the possibility of ticket sales through the customer service centres.

Decided: to note

- (1) the progress achieved to date against the Council Corporate Plan as detailed through the updates provided against its Directorate Plans to 30th September 2011; and
- (2) that the overall performance report would be submitted to the Leadership Panel at its meeting on 22nd November 2011.

9. Panel Work Programme for 2012/13 - discussion.

The Executive Director – Corporate Services

- (1) advised, similar to that in previous years, of the requirement for this Panel to give consideration to a Work Programme of Reviews for the forthcoming year, although commented that, due to the forthcoming Elections in May 2012, it would be advisable to undertake a programme that could be completed within that timescale;
- (2) indicated that, similar to that of the other two Standing Scrutiny Panels, this also provided an opportunity for the Panel to take stock of the progress being made with its current Programme and when she also suggested that, in relation to the Review of Procurement, there was time for another element of Procurement to be identified for review; and
- (3) intimated that, on this basis, she would discuss options with the Chair and report to the next meeting of this Panel with any suggestions for its consideration.

Decided: to note the current position with the Panel Work programme for 2012/13 and that the Executive Director – Corporate Services would report to the next meeting of this Panel on the outcome of her discussions with the Chair.

The meeting ended at 11.45 a.m.