

SCRUTINY AND GOVERNANCE MANAGEMENT PANEL.

Minutes of meeting in County Buildings, Wellington Square, Ayr
on 20th November 2012 at 10.00 a.m.

- Present: Councillors Brian McGinley (Chair), Alec. Clark and Allan Dorans and Provost Helen Moonie.
- Apologies: Councillors John Hampton and Hugh Hunter.
- Attending: V. Andrews, Head of Legal and Administration; C. Monaghan, Head of Policy, Performance and Communication; P. Linton, Performance and Change Management Manager; A. MacLeod, Business and Performance Manager; and E. Wyllie, Committee Services Officer.

1. Minutes of previous meetings.

(1) Annual Report / Minutes.

The Chair referred to the previous Minutes relating to the Annual Report (Page 434, paragraph 1) and enquired into the current position with respect to the review of minuting which had been raised under that item and the Head of Legal and Administration provided an update on this matter.

Following a full discussion when Members of the Panel intimated that they wished to be involved in a review of the format of Minutes, the Head of Legal and Administration confirmed that she would organise an informal meeting of this Panel in the near future, possibly in the form of a workshop session, providing the opportunity for input to the review of Minutes from a Scrutiny and Governance Management perspective and reported that she would compile a report to a future meeting of this Panel thereafter.

(2) The Audit Function.

The Chair referred to the previous Minutes relating to the Audit Function (Page 435, paragraph 1) and enquired into the current position with respect to revisiting the Audit handbook in light of CIPFA guidance and the Head of Legal and Administration confirmed that she was in the process of reviewing these documents in conjunction with the Audit Services Programme Review Manager and would report the outcome to a future meeting.

Decided: to note the Minutes of the previous meeting of 18th September 2012 (issued).

2. Delivering Good Governance.

Reference was made to the Minutes of 18th September 2012 (Page 436, paragraph 5) and there was submitted a report (issued) of 8th November 2012 by the Head of Policy, Performance and Communication inviting Members to scrutinise the Council's Delivering Good Governance arrangements in relation to:- the feedback from the Members' survey; the progress against improvement actions against the Framework; and reviewing the first two principles pertaining to Direction and Roles, as outlined in the appendices to the report.

The Head of Policy, Performance and Communication gave a presentation in relation to the survey outcomes and circulated further data for comparable purposes from 2008 to 2012 as well as an analysis of the 2012 survey in terms of the views of existing Members and new Members.

Arising from discussion, the Head of Policy, Performance and Communication and the Head of Legal and Administration provided further information and clarification in response to the following matters raised by Members of the Panel:-

- the three amber statuses within the action plan (Appendix 2 of the report) relating to the development of the new Community Plan; the review of the Public Performance Reporting Strategy; and the Consultation and Engagement Framework; on the progress being made; and the relationship between actions and the comments made in a recently published Audit Report to Members on similar matters;
- consulting and engaging with the local community with a request for an overview of timescales mapped against Members' involvement to be reported to a future meeting of this Panel, bearing in mind that, as such, Community Engagement was not under the remit of this Panel; and
- the Members' Survey feedback and shifts in perception and whether the reasons for these shifts could be identified and incorporated within the principles being reported to this Panel in terms of action.

A full discussion took place in respect of the role of this Panel in relation to the Standing Scrutiny Panels and the Audit Committee in terms of an overview of scrutiny and governance arrangements and whether this Panel had a co-ordinating role to ensure that any potential scrutiny reviews corresponded with the Council's strategic vision. The Head of Legal and Administration referred to the remits and protocols of the various Panels as prescribed in the Scheme of Delegation which was embarking on being reviewed. It was agreed that the CIPFA Good Scrutiny Guide be circulated to Members of this Panel with a view to discussing this at the next Panel meeting along with the Standing Scrutiny Panel Chairs who would also be invited to take part in this process.

Decided:-to note

- (1) the initial findings from the survey of Members on the Council's Delivering Good Governance arrangements and that action points to address issues would be incorporated into future work programmes;
- (2) the progress which had been made on the improvement actions relating to the Delivering Good Governance Framework and the first two principles of the Framework, namely Direction and Roles;
- (3) that the Head of Policy, Performance and Communication would report to a future meeting of this Panel on the process for taking forward community engagement for the Panel's interest; and
- (4) that the Head of Legal and Administration would circulate a copy of the CIPFA Good Scrutiny Guide to Members of this Panel with a view to discussing this at the next Panel meeting along with the Standing Scrutiny Panel Chairs who would also be invited to take part in this process.

3. Panel Work Programme January 2013 to 31st March 2014.

There was submitted a report (issued) of 9th November 2012 by the Head of Legal and Administration seeking approval of the draft 2013/14 Panel Work Programme as outlined in Appendix 1 of the report relating to Decision-making / Scrutiny and the Delivering Good Governance framework which would incorporate Members' training and development, the Councillors' Code of Conduct and the Annual Report.

Arising from discussion, the Head of Legal and Administration provided further information and clarification in response to the following matters raised by Members of the Panel:-

- whether there was scope within the programme for a degree of flexibility if any ad hoc issues relating to scrutiny considered essential emerged; and
- the process previously undertaken for observing at Standing Scrutiny Panels, ways in which to include the Chairs within this process and a request for questionnaire / feedback forms for the purpose of this exercise to be circulated for completion.

Decided:- to agree the basis of the Panel Work Programme from January 2013 to 31st March 2014 as attached as Appendix 1 to the report subject to continuous review and adjustment as necessary.

The meeting ended at 12 noon.