

**SCRUTINY AND GOVERNANCE MANAGEMENT PANEL.**

Minutes of meeting in County Buildings, Wellington Square, Ayr  
on 24th April 2012 at 10.00 a.m.

- Present: Councillors Ian Douglas (Chair), Stan Fisher, Hugh Hunter, Elaine Little and Winifred Sloan.
- Apology: Councillor Helen Moonie.
- Attending: V. Andrews, Head of Legal and Administration; C. Monaghan, Head of Policy, Performance and Communication; K. O'Hagan, Head of HR and Organisational Development; J. Bradley, Organisational Development Manager; A. MacLeod, Business and Performance Manager; and E. Wyllie, Committee Administrative Officer.

**Opening remarks.**

The Chair introduced and welcomed Kate O'Hagan, the recently appointed Head of HR and Organisational Development to her first meeting of the Panel.

**1. Minutes of previous meetings.**

**Decided:** to note the Minutes of the previous meeting of 6th December 2011 (issued).

**2. Training for Elected Members - Post Election.**

The Organisational Development Manager

- (1) advised of the proposed arrangements for Elected Members' induction training commencing in the weeks immediately following the Local Government Elections taking place on 3rd May 2012;
- (2) outlined the contents of a draft flexible training package currently being considered by the Executive Officers' Group, based on the findings of the Officers' Group led by the Chief Executive, bearing in mind that to avoid an overload of training sessions, information leaflets could instead be provided for some of the subject matters;
- (3) informed that these sessions would be available to new Members as well as refresher training provided for returning Members; and
- (4) commented on post-recess opportunities for learning and development.

Various questions were raised by Members of the Panel in relation to:- whether basic contact information and Directorate structures could be provided to Members from the offset; the delivery of training sessions and whether some sessions should be repeated as a reminder through the course of time; specific training for Panel Chairs and Portfolio-holders; budget training for Members so that they gain an understanding of the budget already set and the decision-making process in this regard; specific training on the financial accounts to explain to Members the key information contained within; and whether there was an opportunity to filter some forms of information, if preferred, for example by ward or by individual Members, and Officers responded accordingly and commented on the use of technology to provide information electronically as well as via the Elected Members' portal.

The Head of Legal and Administration advised that she would feedback the discussion from this meeting with regards to budget training issues to the Executive Director – Corporate Services who was involved with the presentation of a finance session and commented that she would explore the idea of filtering certain information as an option for Members.

**Decided:-** to note the training arrangements being proposed and the availability of information for Elected Members following the Local Government Elections on 3rd May 2012.

### **3. Call-in Arrangements – Annual Review and Statistics.**

There was submitted a report (issued) of 13th April 2012 by the Head of Legal and Administration informing of statistics relating to Call-ins during the period from April 2011 to March 2012, including a further breakdown, as outlined within the Appendices to the report.

The Head of Legal and Administration commented on the observing exercise which would normally take place at this time of year and reminded Members of a previous discussion of this Panel when it was decided that ad hoc visits would be made throughout the course of the year instead of pre-arranged sessions and suggested that this matter be re-visited post Election.

Thereon, various questions and comments were made by Members of the Panel in relation to:- the call-in process and the data presented; the findings undertaken by Officers during their scrutiny visits to other Councils; and whether an improved model for undertaking scrutiny had been identified and Officers responded accordingly.

**Decided:-**

- (1) to note the statistical data presented within the Appendices to the report; and
- (2) that, if required, the Head of Legal and Administration would continue to provide annual updates to future meetings of this Panel.

### **4. Delivering Good Governance – 2011/12 Assessment.**

There was submitted a report (issued) of 17th April 2012 by the Head of Policy, Performance and Communication

- (1) inviting Members to review the 2011/12 year end assessment against the Council's Delivering Good Governance Framework;
- (2) informing that, since the 2010/11 year end assessment against the Delivering Good Governance Framework, progress had continued through work on delivering Directorate Plans, the Improvement Programme and in response to Audit reports;
- (3) advising that work had focused on refining and strengthening arrangements and their effectiveness and summaries of progress achieved against the six principles had been prepared;
- (4) indicating that, based on these assessments, the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council would sign off the whole Framework through signing the governance statement that would be included in the 2011/12 draft Annual Accounts; and

- (5) highlighting that an overview of the main developments over the course of 2011/12 was outlined within the report and the 2011/12 year end assessment was detailed within the Appendix to the report.

Various questions and comments were made by Members of the Panel in relation to:- the excellent progress which had been made in the five year period; the exceptional delivery of the 'Bribery Act 2010' training session; whether this report should be presented to the first meeting of this Panel following the forthcoming Elections as baseline information; and the role of this Panel and whether the Audit function should be part of its remit and the Head of Policy, Performance and Communication responded accordingly. The Head of Legal and Administration commented on the current configuration of Panels and indicated that the decision-making structure could be reviewed by the new Council following the forthcoming election process.

**Decided:-** to agree the 2011/12 year end assessment as outlined in Appendix 1 of the report which would now be signed off and to note that the 2011/12 year end assessment would be presented as baseline information to the first meeting of the Panel following the Elections.

## 5. **Valedictory.**

The Chair took the opportunity to thank Panel Members and Officers for their contribution and support over the years. The Vice-Chair, on behalf of the Panel, also thanked Councillor Douglas for his hard work during his term as Chair of this Panel.

The meeting ended at 10.55 a.m.