

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minute of Meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held in the Committee Room, Fourth Floor, Council Building, 2 High Street, Perth on Wednesday 11 June 2014 at 2.00pm.

Present: Councillors A Stewart, B Vaughan, R Brock, D Cuthbert, D Doogan, A Munro and A Younger.

In Attendance: I Innes, P Dickson, K Marshall, G Taylor, and P Frazer (all Chief Executive's Service); B Atkinson, M Cochlan, P Davison, G Gilvear, R Goldsmith and J Thewlis; (all Education and Children's Services); L Cameron, J Gilruth, C Hendry and A Taylor (all Housing and Community Care); and B Renton (The Environment Service).

Also in Attendance: P Cromwell, B Duncan, N Lessells and J Moyes (all Live Active Leisure).

Councillor A Stewart, Convener, Presiding.

428. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES/SUBSTITUTES

Councillor Stewart welcomed all present to the meeting and no apologies were noted.

429. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest made in terms of the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

430. LIVE ACTIVE LEISURE

The Committee heard a presentation by B Duncan, Chair; J Moyes, Chief Executive Officer; N Lessells, Deputy Chief Executive; and P Cromwell, Head of Operations from Live Active Leisure (LAL). The presentation covered the following topics: (i) governance and scrutiny arrangements; (ii) self-management structures; and (iii) an overview of LAL's community sports facilities and health initiatives for all ages.

In response to a question from Councillor Doogan, N Lessells acknowledged there had been a reduction in turnover during the last financial year due, in part, to good weather during the summer and competition from new facilities in neighbouring council areas. LAL was aiming to achieve around 2% growth per year, based on projected population growth. LAL's objective was to remove barriers to participation by targeting people at transition point as they progressed from school to adulthood. J Moyes commented that LAL was very aware of the challenges posed by the health and well-being agenda and was seeking ways to encourage more young people to participate in active sports. Many young people did not like traditional sports and LAL was continuing to identify ways to engage people by re-shaping services. B Duncan acknowledged that LAL needed to find ways to work more closely with the Health Board to facilitate healthy initiatives in the community.

In response to a question from Councillor Vaughan, B Duncan provided a summary of the steps taken by the LAL Board to manage risk including: asset reporting; bi-monthly board-meetings; risk assessment workshops; and training for Board members. There were plans to introduce 360⁰ reviews for Board members in the future.

Responding to a question from Councillor Stewart, J Moyes outlined the various links that LAL had developed with Council services at all levels including Education and Children's Services.

Councillor Stewart thanked the representatives from Live Active Leisure for their informative presentation.

Action:

Distribute a copy of the presentation to members of the Scrutiny Committee.

B DUNCAN, J MOYES, N LESSELLS, AND P CROMWELL LEFT THE MEETING AT THIS POINT.

L CAMERON, J GILRUTH AND A TAYLOR ENTERED THE MEETING AT THIS POINT.

431. MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minute of meeting of the Scrutiny Committee of 23 April 2014 was submitted, approved as a correct record and authorised for signature.

THE COMMITTEE AGREED TO CHANGE THE ORDER OF BUSINESS FROM THIS POINT.

432. JOINT BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AND IMPROVEMENT PLANS AND ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORTS

(i) Housing and Community Care

There was submitted a report by the Executive Director (Housing and Community Care) (14/229) presenting the Joint Business Management and Improvement Plan 2014/15 and Annual Performance Report 2013/14 for Housing and Community Care, which had been approved by the Community Safety Committee on 21 May 2014 and by the Housing and Health Committee at its meeting on 28 May 2014.

Councillor Vaughan asked for an assurance that the new Health and Social Care structures would meet the needs of older service users particularly in respect of isolation. B Atkinson responded that both the Housing and Community Care and Education and Children's Services BMIPS would, in the future, reflect the range of provision of joint services for older people in more detail. J Gilruth reported that the Reshaping Care for Older People/Accounts Commission Scotland Report, submitted to Housing and Health Committee twice-yearly,

contained detailed information on services. A report could be submitted to Scrutiny Committee outlining the breadth of work being undertaken to re-shape older people's care.

Councillor Stewart questioned how the number of bed days lost, due to delayed discharge, could be reduced with the number of older people in the population increasing. Gilruth responded that barriers to assessment had been removed with the focus on reducing admissions through a co-ordinated approach. An Enhanced Care pilot would see Health and Community Care staff and a community nurse co-located in GP practices in order to quickly identify people who did not need to be admitted to hospital. In addition, work was on-going with Registered Social Landlords to identify people who required a higher level of social care and support.

In response to a question from Councillor Younger about the percentage of tenants accepting housing offers, L Cameron stated that tenants were initially encouraged to select from wide range of housing. However, by the time accommodation became available their family circumstances might have changed and their initial choice was no longer suitable. The Service was currently reviewing the process for people on the waiting list in order to ensure records were accurate and up to date.

In response to question from Councillor Cuthbert regarding the cost per dwelling for collection of council tax, A Taylor confirmed that the performance figure was now available for June 2014, therefore the relevant target would be updated.

Resolved:

- (i) Housing and Community Care's Joint Business Management and Improvement Plan 2014/15 and Annual Performance Report 2013/14, as detailed in the Appendices to Report 14/229, be accepted.
- (ii) The Executive Director (Housing and Community Care) be requested to submit a report on Re-Shaping Older People's Care to a future meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.

L CAMERON AND J GILRUTH LEFT THE MEETING AT THIS POINT.

(ii) Education and Children's Services

There was submitted a report by the Executive Director (Education and Children's Services) (14/219) presenting the Joint Business Management and Improvement Plan 2014/15 and Annual Performance Report 2013/14 for Education and Children's Services, which had been approved by the Lifelong Learning Committee at its meeting on 28 May 2014.

Councillor Doogan noted that the target for weekly gross costs for Looked After Children had been reduced for 2013/14 and asked if this target was achievable. B Atkinson confirmed that there were currently only 15 looked after children that this indicator applied to as the

preferred option was to place children in kinship or foster care. The figures for 2012/13 included the higher cost of placing some children in secure settings.

Councillor Vaughan welcomed the target for pupil attainment at standard and higher grade; however, there was no information on attainment in literacy and numeracy at primary level. B Atkinson stated that there had been concerns previously about the validity of data at this level but that it was an area that could be given further consideration.

Resolved:

Education and Children's Services Joint Business Management and Improvement Plan 2014/15 and Annual Performance Report 2013/14, as detailed in the Appendices to Report 14/219, be accepted.

(iii) Chief Executive's Service

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive (14/254) presenting the Joint Business Management and Improvement Plan 2014/15 and Annual Performance Report 2013/14 for the Chief Executive's Service, which had been approved by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting earlier in the day. Councillor Doogan requested more information on the proposed introduction of an electronic committee management system. G Taylor responded that it was a system for managing the agenda process more efficiently, which would ensure accurate version control and improve access to documents for elected members and the public. There were a number of bespoke systems under consideration and procurement was expected to take place in the near future.

B Renton responded to a further question from Councillor Doogan on the destination of the Council's Modern Apprentices at the end of the two-year programme. She confirmed that there was scope for apprentices to move into full-time roles, as they became available, where they had experience of working in a particular area. G Taylor added that the recruitment process for permanent posts would ensure that the successful apprentice had the right skill-set to be successful in their new role.

Councillor Cuthbert observed that the BMIPs had already been seen, and commented on, by Committee members elsewhere and queried whether consideration by the Scrutiny Committee remained a constructive exercise. There may be other areas, not included in the BMIPs, which the Scrutiny Committee should be considering. B Renton acknowledged Councillor Cuthbert's concerns and agreed that further work needed to be done to ensure that the Committee gained an overview of how all the Services linked together and reflected the overall performance of the Council. Councillor Stewart suggested that it would helpful for Committee members to have an informal discussion out-with the meeting to agree what they wanted to achieve from the annual review process.

Resolved:

The Chief Executive's Joint Business Management and Improvement Plan 2014/15 and Annual Performance Report 2013/14, as detailed in the Appendices to Report 14/254, be accepted.

(iv) The Environment Service

There was submitted a report by the Executive Director (Environment) (14/230) presenting the Joint Business Management and Improvement Plan 2014/15 and Annual Performance Report 2013/14 for the Environment Service, which had been approved by the Community Safety Committee at its meeting on 21 May 2014 and by the Environment Committee and the Enterprise and Infrastructure Committee at their meetings on 4 June 2014.

In response to a question from Councillor Doogan regarding the maintenance of parks and open spaces, B Renton reported that significant work was being undertaken to manage resources more effectively. A seven-day shift pattern had been introduced for maintenance staff, the number of play parks had been reduced, there was less frequent grass cutting which in turn encouraged biodiversity, and discussions were taking place with communities to find out what people's concerns were.

Councillor Younger asked if there was any information available on the number of businesses in Perth and Kinross which had closed during the period. B Renton reported that it was difficult to track business closures with any accuracy as there was very little data available. Councillor Cuthbert noted the numbers of buildings registered as at risk during 2013/2014 and queried whether the figures were accurate when two properties constituted multiple entries on the register. B Renton acknowledged the discrepancy and agreed to reconsider this performance figure.

Resolved:

The Environment Service's Joint Business Management and Improvement Plan 2014/15 and Annual Performance Report 2013/14, as detailed in the Appendices to Report 14/230, be accepted.

COUNCILLOR DOOGAN, P DICKSON AND B RENTON LEFT THE MEETING AT THIS POINT.

433. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

There was submitted a report by the Head of Legal Services (14/264) outlining how Perth and Kinross Council complies with national standards for good corporate governance and meeting the requirements of relevant legislation and current good practice.

Councillor Vaughan referred to the section on internal and external Reports and commented that there was a need to ensure that policies and strategies were current and appropriate. I Innes acknowledged that this was a valid point and that further consideration would be given to ensure that reports were relevant.

Councillor Cuthbert queried why it appeared that updates on housing benefit performance were only submitted to the Executive Officer Team. A Taylor clarified that the quarterly reports would also be submitted to the Audit Committee.

Resolved:

The 2013/14 Annual Governance Statement be approved.

434. COUNCIL COMPLAINTS REPORT FOR APRIL 2013 – MARCH 2014

There was submitted a report by the Head of Legal Services (14/260) outlining the performance of the new Council Complaints Handling Procedure during the first year of its operation from April 2013 to March 2014.

Councillor Cuthbert asked if the results from a questionnaire issued to complainants would be shared with the Scrutiny Committee. I Innes responded that the intention was to post the results on the Council's website; however, the results would also be included in a report on SPSO statistics to be submitted to the next meeting of Committee on 1 October 2014. However, an interim report could be made available to members of the Committee.

In response to a further question from Councillor Cuthbert in respect of the logging of school complaints, I Innes accepted that it was a challenge to ensure that the numbers of school complaints were accurately represented. However, there had to be a degree of proportionality as recording everything that might be considered a complaint would be very time consuming. I Innes was satisfied that anything of a significant nature would reach the level of a recorded complaint. Councillor Vaughan commented that there may be reluctance to record complaints by parents and head teachers because of concerns on how that might reflect on the child or the school. I Innes proposed re-evaluating the level of complaints in schools and would discuss the issue with colleagues in Education and Children's Services.

Resolved:

- (i) The content of Report 14/166 be noted.
- (ii) Head of Legal Services to provide an interim report on the results of a questionnaire to complainants about their experience of the complaints process.

I INNES LEFT THE MEETING AT THIS POINT.

435. GUIDE TO SCRUTINY AT PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL 2014

There was submitted a report by the Depute Director (Environment) (14/261) presenting the Guide to Scrutiny at Perth and Kinross Council revised for 2014.

Resolved:

The content of Report 14/261 be noted.

436. FIFTH SCRUTINY REVIEW: CHARGING FOR SERVICES (ART 259 ` refers)

There was submitted a report by the Depute Director (Environment) (14/262), outlining the scope of the fifth scrutiny review to be undertaken by the Scrutiny Committee. The purpose of the review is to examine the issues highlighted within Audit Scotland's Charging for Services Report by working together with officers and elected members to explore best practice and opportunities for improvement.

Resolved:

The content of Report 14/262 be noted.

437. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD PLANNER 2014/15

There was submitted a report (14/263), by the Depute Director (Environment) presenting a forward planner for scrutiny at Perth and Kinross Council during 2014/15.

Resolved:

The content of Report 14/262 be noted.

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