

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
7 FEBRUARY 2018

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minute of meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held in the Council Chamber, 2 High Street, Perth on Wednesday 7 February 2017 at 2.00pm.

Present: Councillors G Laing, S McCole, C Ahern, H Anderson, H Coates, D Doogan, D Illingworth, A Parrott, C Purves and M Williamson (substituting for Councillor T McEwan).

In Attendance: B Renton (Executive Director, The Environment Service); S Devlin (Executive Director, Education and Children's Services); K McNamara, K Molley, F Robertson, L Simpson and G Taylor (all Corporate and Democratic Services).

Apologies: Councillor T McEwan

Councillor G Laing, Convener, Presiding.

69. TRIBUTE TO COUNCILLOR IAN CAMPBELL

Prior to commencement of business, Councillor Laing paid tribute to Councillor Ian Campbell, who had died suddenly earlier in the week, and expressed condolences to his family. Councillor Coates also paid tribute and expressed condolences.

70. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Convener welcomed all those present to the meeting and apologies were noted as above.

71. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- (i) Councillor G Laing declared a non-financial interest in Art. 73(i)
- (ii) Councillors C Ahern and A Parrott declared a non-financial interest in Art. 73(ii)
- (iii) Councillor H Coates declared a non-financial interest in Art. 73(iii)

72. MINUTE OF THE MEETING OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE OF SEPTEMBER 2017

The minute of meeting of the Scrutiny Committee of 29 November 2017 (Arts. 677-686) was submitted, approved as a correct record and authorised for signature.

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73. UPDATES BY ARMS' LENGTH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

(i) Live Active Leisure

Having declared a non-financial interest in this item, Councillor Laing remitted the chair to Councillor McCole, Vice-Convener, who presided for the following item.

J Moyes, Chief Executive and D Longmuir, Board Member, Live Active Leisure, gave a verbal update on their progress and answered members' questions. Members sought assurance on matters such as: attendance statistics of leisure facilities; the progress of PH2O; update of new contract and long term savings. The Convener thanked the representatives for their attendance and they left the meeting at this point.

COUNCILLOR LAING RESUMED THE CHAIR AT THIS POINT.

(ii) Culture Perth and Kinross

H Smout, Chief Executive and Lady G Bullough, Board Member, Culture Perth and Kinross, gave an update on progress and answered members' questions. Members sought assurance on matters such as: working with external organisations; charging fees; online orders and performance. The Convener thanked the representatives for their attendance and they left the meeting at this point.

(iii) Horsecross Arts LTD

G Gibbons, Chief Executive, C McKenzie, Finance Director and M Linklater, Chair, Horsecross Arts Ltd., gave an update on progress and answered members' questions. Members sought assurance on matters such as: the success of the Christmas pantomime production; budgets; external funding, membership schemes and the proposed activity across Perth Theatre & Perth Concert Hall. The Convener thanked the representatives for their attendance and they left the meeting at this point.

74. COUNCIL COMPLAINTS PERFORMANCE REPORT

There was submitted a report by the Head of Legal and Governance Services (18/39) providing assurance that the Council has an adequate and effective Complaints Handling Procedure in place. The report also satisfied public performance reporting requirements in accordance with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman's (SPSO) performance measures for local authorities.

Councillor D Illingworth emphasised how important he felt it was for the public to have the opportunity to complain if they had a problem so the Council was able to rectify the situation as soon as possible.

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In a response to a query from Councillor Anderson regarding complaints out with jurisdiction of the SPSO, L Simpson stated that in all cases there were alternative processes for the complaint to be dealt with by another body.

In response to a query from Councillor S McCole that whether, given the number of ways in which complaints could be submitted, there was information on all complaints captured. L Simpson advised that there were processes in place in each service. B Renton and S Devlin gave an assurance these measures ensured that complaints are notified and relevant data collected.

Resolved:

The performance of the Complaints Handling Procedure continue to be monitored.

75. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM AUDIT SCOTLAND BEST VALUE ASSURANCE REPORTS: INVERCLYDE COUNCIL AND RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL

There was submitted a report by the Depute Chief Executive & Chief Operating Officer (18/40) providing a summary of the key messages from Audit Scotland's Best Value Assurance Reports (BVARs) for Inverclyde Council (June 2017) and Renfrewshire Council (August 2017). The report also benchmarked this Council's position against the key messages from the BVARs and summarised areas of focus for the Council. The learning from the BVARs would help the Council to meet its statutory duty to deliver best value in all of its activities.

In response to a query from Councillor Coates regarding the purpose of these reports, K McNamara explained that Audit Scotland scrutinises the performance of councils and publishes BVARs with the expectation that all councils will act on the key messages, by benchmarking themselves against the findings in these reports and by using the learning from that benchmarking to improve their activity. He further explained that Audit Scotland had a programme of issues for local authorities recognising that some have higher risk but the intention is that they would visit all 32 Councils within 5 years. The purpose of these reports is to let the public know that the Council are meeting their best value duty.

In response to a query from the Convener regarding different areas of practice across the country, K McNamara highlighted the benefit of using BVARs as a positive benchmarking tool for the Council could improve in comparing themselves to other local authorities.

In response to a query from Councillors, K McNamara and L Simpson advised that the benchmarking information would also inform the forthcoming process to prepare the annual governance statement. Councillor McCole added that it will prevent the Council from becoming complacent.

Resolved:

The benchmarking of Perth and Kinross Council against the Best Value Assurance Reports for Inverclyde and Renfrewshire Councils be noted.

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COUNCILLOR M WILLIAMSON LEFT THE MEETING AT THIS POINT.

IT WAS AGREED THAT THE PUBLIC AND PRESS SHOULD BE EXCLUDED DURING CONSIDERATION OF THE FOLLOWING ITEM IN ORDER TO AVOID THE DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION WHICH IS EXEMPT IN TERMS OF SCHEDULE 7A TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (SCOTLAND) ACT 1973.

76. MINUTE OF MEETING OF THE SOCIAL WORK COMPLAINTS REVIEW COMMITTEE OF 12 OCTOBER 2017

There was submitted and noted the minute of the Social Work Complaints Review Committee of 12 October 2017.

77. MINUTE OF MEETING OF SOCIAL WORK COMPLAINTS REVIEW COMMITTEE OF 3 AUGUST 2017

There was submitted and noted the minute of the Social Work Complaints Review Committee of 3 August 2017.

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