

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minute of meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held in the Gannochy Suite, Dewar's Centre, Glover Street, Perth on Wednesday 15 June 2016 at 2.00pm.

Present: Councillors B Vaughan, D Doogan, J Flynn, M Roberts (substituting for Councillor A Stewart) and A Younger.

In Attendance: B Renton and C Jolly (both the Environment Service); S Devlin, D Stokoe, P McAvoy (up to and including Art), S Johnston (up to and including Art) and P Davison (all Education and Children's Services); L Cameron (up to and including Art ...), A Taylor, C Hendry, L Brady (up to and including Art ...) and L Sinclair (up to and including Art ...) (all Housing and Community Care); G Taylor, L Simpson, K Donaldson and S Hendry (all Corporate and Democratic Services); K McNamara, Head of Strategic Commissioning and Organisational Development.

Apologies for Absence: Councillors A Stewart, D Cuthbert and A Munro.

Councillor B Vaughan, Vice-Convener, Presiding

. **WELCOME AND APOLOGIES / SUBSTITUTES**

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

. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

. **MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minute of meeting of the Scrutiny Committee of 20 April 2016 (Arts. 310-319) was submitted, approved as a correct record and authorised for signature.

. **MATTERS ARISING**

There were no matters arising.

. **EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES JOINT BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2016/17 AND ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2015/16**

There was submitted a report by the Director (Education and Children's Services) (16/225) presenting the Joint Business Management and Improvement Plan 2016/17 and Annual Performance Report 2015/16 for Education and Children's Services.

It was noted that the report had been approved by the Lifelong Learning Committee on 25 May 2016.

In response to a question from Councillor Doogan regarding the total number of children and young people with part-time timetables, P McAvoy confirmed that these were used as a short term option to support any learning needs with the desired outcome being a return to a full-time timetable.

With reference to key performance indicators on attainment figures outlined in Report 16/225, Councillor Doogan asked if Education and Children's Services had a view on whether the national reduction in the educational maintenance allowance was impacting on secondary school opportunities. P McAvoy commented that in general, more young people were remaining in school for 4th, 5th and 6th year for both academic and vocational opportunities. Councillor Doogan suggested that a broader discussion take place around this subject, and Councillor Vaughan suggested that an item be included on the agenda for a future meeting of the Lifelong Learning Committee.

Resolved:

Education and Children's Services Joint Business Management and Improvement Plan 2016/17 and Annual Performance Report 2015/16, as detailed in the Appendices to Report 16/225, be accepted.

THE ENVIRONMENT SERVICE JOINT BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN AND ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

There was submitted a report by Director (Environment) (16/238) presenting the Joint Business Management and Improvement Plan 2016/17 and Annual Performance Report 2015/16 for the Environment Service.

It was noted that the report had been approved by the Environment and Enterprise and Infrastructure Committees on 1 June 2016, and the Community Safety Committee on 8 June 2016.

Councillor Doogan asked for an explanation as to the sharp rise in the percentage of Scottish average monthly earnings in 2015/16 and also queried the sample size of the survey. P Davidson confirmed that the sample size was 1% from HMRC PAYE records. B Renton commented that this was a sample survey and would require to be monitored over the next few years before a trend could be confirmed.

With reference to the number of houses built in Perth and Kinross, Councillor Doogan queried why the 2015/16 figure was not available. B Renton confirmed the number was 634.

Following a query by Councillor Vaughan on the Council's Risk Management Strategy and matrix and the circumstances around the identified risks, B Renton agreed to circulate more details to members.

Resolved:

The Environment Service Joint Business Management and Improvement Plan 2016/17 and Annual Performance Report 2015/16, as detailed in Appendix 1 to Report 16/238, be accepted.

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY CARE JOINT BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN AND ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

There was submitted a report by the Director (Housing and Social Work) (16/232) presenting the Joint Business Management and Improvement Plan 2016/17 and Annual Performance Report 2015/16 for Housing and Community Care.

It was noted that the report had been approved by the Housing and Health Committee on 25 May 2016 and the Community Safety Committee on 8 June 2016.

In relation to the number of families with children presenting as homeless in 2015/16, Councillor Vaughan asked if there was any more that the Council could do to address this trend. L Cameron confirmed that any individual could present as homeless, and it was then up to the Council to assess the position and look at the options available.

With reference to preventing and reducing rent arrears and the local improvement targets designed for staff in each team to intervene at an early stage, and following a query from Councillor Vaughan on the sharing of good practice, L Cameron confirmed that there was good networking and sharing of initiatives across all teams.

In relation to the percentage of people living at home who are over the age of 65 requiring no further service following reablement, Councillor Vaughan asked what measures were being taken to stop isolation and encourage befriending. L Cameron confirmed that as well as dementia cafes and befriending schemes, work also took place with the third sector to offer support.

Resolved:

Housing and Community Care Joint Business Management and Improvement Plan 2015/16 and Annual Performance Report 2014/15, as detailed in the Appendix to Report 16/232, be accepted.

CORPORATE AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2015/16

There was submitted a report by the Depute Chief Executive, HCC (Corporate and Community Development Services) and Chief Operating Officer (16/265) presenting the Annual Performance Report 2015/16 for Corporate and Democratic Services.

It was noted that the report had been approved by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee earlier in the day.

Councillor Flynn made reference to the range of measures that had been introduced over 2015/16 to aid the recruitment of teachers in response to a national shortage. S Devlin informed the Committee that the expenses paid for relocation had assisted in successful recruitment. Following a query from Councillor Vaughan on the Learn to Teach initiative, K Donaldson agreed to share further information with the Committee on figures relating to both internal and external recruitment.

With reference to the increase in sickness absence days per employee, and with particular reference to teachers, Councillor Doogan queried both the reasons behind this and the change in assessment method. K Donaldson and S Devlin reported that a number of factors were involved, including mental health, and that individual cases were monitored closely, as they were across the Council, with preventative actions put in place where possible. K Donaldson also informed the Committee that the Council's software system that allowed staff to input sickness information on-line required a working pattern for the system to calculate detailed information in terms of the assessment method. There was also now a national group to examine performance indicators.

Following a query from Councillor Doogan on the percentage of Civic Licenses issued within six weeks of the application and whether the target was realistic, L Simpson agreed to circulate more information to the Committee as some of the individual cases were complex and time consuming.

Resolved:

Corporate and Democratic Services Annual Performance Report 2015/16, as detailed in the Appendix to Report 16/265, be accepted.

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

There was submitted a report by the Head of Legal and Governance Services (16/274) seeking approval of the Annual Governance Statement for the financial year 2015/16 which provided assurance as to the effectiveness of the Council's governance framework and in particular the system of internal control.

In terms of the scope of the Governance Statement to cover the four organisations that are included in the Council's Group Accounts, it was agreed that the Scrutiny Committee should invite representatives or request reports from these organisations to be brought to the Committee as and when it was felt necessary in terms of scrutiny of performance.

Resolved:

- (i) The Annual Governance Statement 2015-2016, as detailed in the Appendix to Report 16/274, be approved.
- (ii) The Head of Legal and Governance Services be requested to progress the governance issues as set out in Sections 3.2 and 3.3 of Report 16/274.

FOI PERFORMANCE REPORT 2015

There was submitted a report by the Head of Legal and Governance Services (16/275) providing an overview of the Council's performance in relation to requests for information under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 for the year 2015. This information is currently reported annually on the basis of calendar year.

Resolved:

- (i) The Council's performance in respect of processing requests under the Freedom Of Information (Scotland) Act continues to be very good and is above target for 2015.
- (ii) The Freedom Of Information (Scotland) Act helps to provide an assurance of openness and transparency to the public in their dealings with the Council and that it is essential that this service continues to operate to a high standard.
- (iii) The annual reporting cycle would move from calendar year basis to financial year basis to align with other performance reporting, be noted.

GOVERNANCE AND SUPPORT OF THE COUNCIL'S TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME

There was submitted a report by the Depute Chief Executive, Environment (Sustainability, Strategic and Entrepreneurial Development) (16/269) proposing a new governance arrangement to meet the evolving requirements of the Council's Transformation Programme (2015-2020).

It was noted that Report 16/269 had been agreed by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee earlier in the day.

Resolved:

- (i) The governance proposals for the Transformation Programme and supporting roles and responsibilities, as detailed in Report 16/269, be noted.
- (ii) A review of the governance arrangements be carried out after six months, to assess their fitness for purpose.