

SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

Minute of hybrid meeting of the Scrutiny and Performance Committee held in the Council Chambers, 2 High Street, Perth, on Wednesday 1 February 2023 at 10:00am.

Present: Councillor C Stewart, Bailie A Bailey, Councillors K Allan, S Carr, E Drysdale, A Forbes, M Frampton, I Massie, W Robertson, C Shiers and F Smith.

In Attendance: B Renton (Executive Director, Communities); S Devlin (Executive Director, Education and Children's Services); B Murray, D Littlejohn and K Smith (Communities) L Simpson, K Molley, A Brown and M Pasternak (all Corporate and Democratic Services).

Councillor C Stewart, Convener, Presiding.

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Convener welcomed all those present to the meeting.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made in terms of the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

3. MINUTE OF MEETING OF THE SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE OF 30 NOVEMBER 2022

The minute of meeting of the Scrutiny and Performance Committee of 30 November 2022 was submitted and approved as a correct record.

4. OUTSTANDING BUSINESS STATEMENT

Resolved:

The status of actions in the Outstanding Business Statement, be noted and completed actions removed accordingly.

5. SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE FORWARD PLANNER

Resolved:

The Scrutiny and Performance Committee Forward Planner for 2023, be noted.

6. PLANNING PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK 11 (2021 – 22)

There was submitted a report by the Head of Planning and Development (23/28) relating to the Perth and Kinross Performance Framework 11 (2021-22) (PPF11).

In response to a question from Councillor Forbes regarding engagement with NHS Tayside about the provision of medical services when giving approval to large

planning developments, K Smith advised that engagement occurs with NHS Tayside primarily during the preparation of a new Local Development Plan. They are consulted on the various allocations proposed and are given the opportunity to provide feedback or raise any issues, which would be incorporated into the Local Development Plan. In response to another question from Councillor Forbes, B Murray confirmed that engagement would continue with NHS Tayside in relation to LDP3. She added that the development of the new National Planning Framework would make it easier for earlier engagement with all stakeholders in the process.

Members requested for the protocol on Engagement with NHS Tayside and the NHS response to the 2015 Consultation of the LDP2 to be circulated.

In response to a question from Bailie Bailey regarding specific criteria in carrying out in person site visits, K Smith advised that careful consideration would be taken in accessing the requirement of an in-person site visit. The decision made would be in line with the guidance published on the Council website. He added that a risk-based assessment would always be undertaken, and the decision would be based on the information made available which can vary across different applications and sometimes more data would be requested. To improve the transparency of the decision-making process of site-visits, Bailie Bailey suggested including this as a future service improvement in PPF12.

In response to a question from Councillor Shiers regarding challenges of staffing and recruitment, D Littlejohn advised that nationally there is a shortage of qualified Planners in Scotland. He confirmed that the project Future Planners is underway by the Scottish Government and the Royal Town Planning Institute to increase provision and help reduce staffing shortages by gaining more qualified Planners. D Littlejohn added that Building Standards have introduced a Modern Apprentice Scheme and Planning are also looking to roll out the programme in the hope to gain more individuals into the sector. Locally, there are plans for engagement with senior pupils across schools in Perth and Kinross to raise awareness and encourage young individuals to think about a career in Planning.

In response to a similar question from Councillor Forbes regarding staffing issues in Perth and Kinross Council, D Littlejohn advised that nearly all vacancies in Planning and Development in the Council have been filled. There has also been strong support for the graduate programme with three employees currently in post. D Littlejohn highlighted the long-term benefits of working for a local authority, including a career average pension, sick pay entitlement, childcare vouchers, access to the car lease scheme and flexible working. However, individuals may choose to leave the organisation due to enhanced wages offered by the Private Sector.

In response to a question from Councillor Shiers regarding community engagement on the planning process and development of LDP's, B Murray advised that early engagement with Community Councils, Development Trusts, community groups, schools, and young people, would be undertaken in relation to LDP3. She added that drop-in sessions would be arranged to help raise awareness and these would be extended across communities in Perth and Kinross. In addition, PKC have encouraged community groups to hold their own events to gather information and evidence from communities on their thoughts of the area to feed into the overall engagement process. In response to another question from Councillor Shiers, K Smith added that PKC are

happy to offer advice and training to Community Council members on their role in the planning application process.

In response to a question from Councillor Massie, David Littlejohn advised that several elected member briefing sessions are planned, including for the new LDP process and NPF4.

In response to a question from Councillor Allan, K Smith advised that PKC perform well in the Scottish average and officers continue to look at year on year improvement. In response to a question from Councillor C Stewart regarding the number of complaints received and how this can be captured, D Littlejohn confirmed that this could be included in future performance reports.

In response to a question from Councillor Forbes regarding cost recovery for planning applications, D Littlejohn advised that the full cost of running the Development Management system can be fully recovered through fees. The most recent fee increases made significant progress but there is still an unequal gap across authorities that have a greater number of major applications than authorities that are processing many household applications. D Littlejohn added that due to the impact of factors such as inflation and construction, it may be a couple of years before further changes are made to planning fees.

Regarding case studies, members highlighted the benefit of sharing examples of good and not so good practice so service performance can be properly scrutinised by elected members and improvements made can be analysed.

Members thanked officers for their work in preparing the Planning Performance Framework 11.

Resolved:

- (i) The contents of Report 23/28, be scrutinised.
- (ii) The appended Ministerial feedback received, be scrutinised.
- (iii) Suggestions to the case studies and service improvements to be included in PPF12, be scrutinised.

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