

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minute of meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held virtually via Microsoft Teams on Wednesday 15 September 2021 at 9.30am.

Present: Councillors S McCole, A Parrott, L Barrett, H Coates, J Duff (substituting for Councillor D Illingworth), A Jarvis, I Massie, X McDade, C Reid, F Sarwar, F Smith, C Stewart and W Wilson.

In Attendance: S Devlin, Executive Director (Education and Children's Services); M Butterworth, F Crofts, L Dott, C Guild, C Hendry, E Ritchie, A Seggie, F Robertson (all Communities); S Johnston, J Chiles, S Cooper, G Doogan, D Macluskey, F Mackay, B Martin-Scott and L Richards (all Education and Children's Services) G Paterson (Health and Social Care Partnership) K Donaldson, L Brady, I Caldwell, G Fogg, C Judge, J Walker, S Walker, D Williams, D Adams, A Brown, A McMeekin and M Pasternack (all Corporate and Democratic Services).

Apologies: Councillor D Illingworth.

Councillor S McCole, Convener, Presiding.

The Convener led discussion on Items 4, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11, with the Vice-Convener leading discussion on Items 5 and 6.

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

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

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. MINUTE OF MEETING OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE OF 12 MAY 2021

The minute of meeting of the Scrutiny Committee of 9 June 2021 was submitted and approved as a correct record.

It was noted that there were outstanding issues on Abernaye Primary School; Governance arrangements for Local Action Partnerships and Business Gateway and that such issues would be raised with officers and brought to a future meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.

4. UPDATE BY ARMS LENGTH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

(i) Update by Horsecross Arts Ltd

There was a slide-based presentation delivered by Nick Williams, Chief Executive Officer, Horsecross Arts Ltd., and Willie Anderson, Head of Finance and Administration, Horsecross Arts Ltd. During the presentation,

Nick Williams made specific reference to the Programme of Activity for the summer of 2021, the re-opening of venues to audiences, operations and staffing, with Willie Anderson providing members with an update on the financial situation of Horsecross Arts Ltd.

Members sought assurance on matters such as additional revenue and funding with specific regards to the pantomime, Covid protocols and their impact upon performances, and revenue from rescheduled ticket sales.

The Convener thanked Nick Williams and Willie Anderson, Horsecross Arts Ltd for their attendance.

(ii) Culture Perth and Kinross

There was a slide-based presentation delivered by Helen Smout, Chief Executive Officer, Culture Perth and Kinross. During the presentation, Helen Smout made specific reference to returning visitor numbers, online content launched during the Covid-19 Pandemic and changing use of Libraries, including their role in supporting wellbeing and recovery.

Members sought assurance on matters such as the reopening of Libraries and Economic Impact.

The Convener thanked Helen Smout for her attendance.

5. ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2021/22

There was submitted a report by the Interim Chief Executive (21/159) providing an overview of how the council performed in 2020/21 against the strategic objectives for Perth and Kinross, as set out in the Council's Corporate Plan 2018-22.

In response to a query from Councillor Barrett regarding the implementation of the Full Fibre Network, A Seggie advised that, whilst there had been some issues which had led to delays in implementation of the Full Fibre Network, the project was active and the aim was for the implementation to be completed by the end of 2021.

In response to a query from Councillor Stewart on subject choices in schools, D Macluskey advised members that five new subjects were being offered to pupils in Perth and Kinross as part of the virtual campus, and all five of these subjects were at Advanced Higher level.

Resolved:

The contents of Report 21/87, be noted.

6. EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES JOINT BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2021/22 AND ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2020/21

There was submitted a report by the Executive Director (Education and Children's Services) (21/158) presenting the Business Management and Improvement Plan (BMIP) for 2021/22 and Annual Performance Report 2020/21 for Education and

Children's Services, providing a report on progress, performance against key performance indicators, and setting out priorities for the current year.

In response to a query from Councillor Wilson regarding Education and Children's Services' response to resourcing issues, S Devlin advised that this was a wider issue and Education and Children's Services were well-equipped to deal with any issues in the regard. S Johnston further advised that no issues had been presented when recruiting teachers, and that all appropriate teaching and support staff were in place in schools in Perth and Kinross.

Resolved:

The contents of Report 21/158, be noted.

THERE FOLLOWED A 10 MINUTE RECESS

7. ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2020-21 BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2021-22

There was submitted a report by the Executive Director (Communities) (21/160) presenting the Communities Annual Performance Report 2020-21 and Business Management and Improvement Plan 2021-22.

In response to a query from Councillor Simpson regarding slippage in the implementation of school exclusion zones, M Butterworth advised members that some issues had been faced with regards to recruitment and resources, but did advise that road safety initiatives were a priority and that eight projects had been completed in this regard.

In response to a query from Councillor Wilson regarding challenges around flooding, M Butterworth advised members that residents would be communicated with in this regard, and also there was a view to bring street sweepers who had been redeployed into refuse roles back into their substantive roles.

In response to a query from Councillor Parrott regarding whether the process of business support through the Covid-19 Pandemic was still ongoing, A Seggie advised members that most staff had been stood down from this role, but that some funding was still remaining, and work was ongoing to determine how best to distribute funds.

In response to a query from Councillor McCole regarding medical priority transfers in relation to housing, E Ritchie advised that these were built into allocation priorities in order to speed up the process, and that there was now a monthly monitoring of these cases.

Resolved:

The contents of Report 21/160, be noted.

8. CORPORATE AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2021-22

There was submitted a report by the Chief Operating Officer (21/157) presenting the Business Management and Improvement Plan 2021-22 for Corporate and Democratic Services, setting out priorities for the Service and improvement activity to enable and support delivery of the Council's strategic objectives and priority outcomes.

Resolved:

The contents of Report 21/157, be noted.

9. CORPORATE WORKFORCE PLAN 2018-21

There was submitted a report by the Chief Operating Officer (21/161) showcasing the key achievements from the Council's Corporate Workforce Plan – Building Ambition for the period 2018-21.

In response to a query from Councillor Stewart regarding a joint working agreement for the Health & Social Care Partnership, K Donaldson advised that whilst there was no further progress with NHS Tayside on this matter, it remained a longer-term ambition.

Resolved:

The contents of Report 21/161, be noted.

10. FOI PERFORMANCE REPORT 2020-21

There was submitted a report by the Head of Legal and Governance Services (21/162) describing the Council's performance in relation to its obligations under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004 for the year 2020-21, also providing an overview of some of the Council's other information-related activities.

In response to a query from Councillor Parrott on resources spent on FOI requests with the drop in requests, J Walker advised that, whilst there had been a decrease in requests, many of the requests received were complex in relation to the Covid-19 Pandemic, and as such were more time consuming for Officers.

Resolved:

The contents of Report 21/162, be noted.

11. COUNCIL COMPLAINTS PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR 2019-20 AND 2020-21

There was submitted a report by the Head of Legal and Governance Services (21/163) providing assurance that the Council has an adequate and effective Complaints Handling Procedure (CHP) in place and to advise the Committee of work undertaken to improve performance in relation to the Council's handling of complaints, and to satisfy public performance reporting requirements in accordance with the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman's (SPSO) performance measures for local authorities.

Resolved:

The contents of Report 21/163, be noted.