

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
21 JUNE 2017

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minute of meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held in the Council Chamber, 2 High Street, Perth on Wednesday 21 June 2017 at 2.30pm.

Present: Councillors G Laing, C Ahern, K Baird (substituting for Councillor A Jarvis) H Coates, D Doogan, D Illingworth, S McCole, T McEwan, A Parrott, C Purves, (substituting for Councillor C Reid), and C Stewart.

In Attendance: B Renton (The Environment Service); A Cook (Education and Children's Services); C McCarthy, K McNamara, M Mitchell, L Simpson, J Somerville and G Taylor (all Corporate and Democratic Services); and L Cameron and J Mayglothling (both Housing and Community Safety).

Apologies: Councillors A Jarvis and C Reid.

Councillor G Laing, Convener, Presiding.

365. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

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

In terms of Standing Order 13, the Committee agreed to record the meeting for training purposes.

366. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

367. MINUTE OF THE MEETING OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE OF 19 APRIL 2017

The minute of meeting of the Scrutiny Committee of 19 April 2017 (Arts. 229-238) was submitted, approved as a correct record and authorised for signature.

368. SEVENTH SCRUTINY REVIEW – "ROLE OF SCRUTINY IN A CHANGING WORLD" (Art. 237)

At the request of the Convener, there was submitted a report by the Convener of the previous Scrutiny Committee (17/161) presenting a new guide to Scrutiny at Perth and Kinross Council and focussing on scrutiny activities in preparation for the new Council in 2017.

The Convener commended the work already undertaken by the previous Scrutiny Committee and advised that the report had been submitted for information

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as it already been approved, he then, however, invited members to discuss the report and to ask questions.

In response to a query from Councillor Doogan regarding the assurance that the work of the Committee was of direct relevance to local people, K McNamara advised of the evolving arena of partnership and collaborative working and in particular to the emerging role of Community Action Partnerships.

Councillor Stewart asked a question relevant to the application of external standards applying to internal controls and L Simpson reported that the scrutiny function was not a prescribed framework similar to that of the audit function and was governed by the very broad CIPFA Guidance. K McNamara also referred to best value characteristics and guidance through learning from other local authorities and relevant national studies. He also noted that the Local Scrutiny Plan 2017-18 was due to be submitted to the next Council meeting on 28 June 2017.

Resolved:

It be noted that Report 17/161 had been approved by the previous Scrutiny Committee on 19 April 2017 (Art. 237 refers) and was submitted to this Committee for information and discussion.

369. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2016/17

There was submitted a report by the Head of Legal and Governance Services (17/223) seeking approval of the Annual Governance Statement for the financial year 2016/17 which provided assurance as to the effectiveness of the Council's governance framework and in particular the system of internal controls.

It was noted that Appendix A had been referred to as Appendix 1 in the body of the report.

In response to questions regarding the scope of responsibility, the robust process, and good governance, L Simpson advised that as the framework was developing further updates would be submitted to the Committee in due course.

Resolved:

The Annual Governance Statement 2016/17, as detailed in Appendix A to Report 17/223, be approved for inclusion in the Council's Annual Accounts for 2016/17.

370. FOLLOWING THE PUBLIC POUND ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17

There was submitted a report by the Head of Legal and Governance Services (17/224), (1) describing the arrangements for monitoring of the performance against the Council's local Code of Guidance for Funding External Bodies and Following the Public Pound for financial year 2016/2017; and (2) advising of the enhancements made to governance arrangements which align the Code with the approved Procurement Strategy.

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Councillor Doogan requested further information regarding the funding of CATH (Churches Action for the Homeless) and asked about the York Place location and the provision of services compared to potential in-house provision. L Cameron confirmed satisfaction with service provision and noted that relocation alternatives were currently being examined.

Councillor Coates commented on initial funding encouraging the capacity for providers to self-support and Councillor Illingworth asked about the amount of relatively small payments of £150-250. In response, B Renton noted that even very small contributions could be invaluable especially in rural areas. Councillor Parrott suggested that the contents of the report did not demonstrate the value of the activities being funded and B Renton noted that this style of reporting was necessary for this Committee but that 'good news stories' were reported to committee by other means. Councillor Stewart asked if applications had to be made annually and B Renton confirmed that payments continued while any provider remained in existence.

In response to a question from Councillor Stewart regarding the split between bought-in services and providing funding to support providers, M Mitchell noted that due to recent legislative changes, in the future reporting in this respect would become clearer. She added that previously some of the bought-in services did not fall under public procurement rules.

The Convener requested clarification on the Council's role regarding Arms Length External Organisations (ALEOs) / Tayside Contracts and their ability to self-certify their governance arrangements. L Simpson reported that, for example, Tayside Contracts produced its own Annual Governance Statement for approval by the Tayside Contracts Joint Committee, and this was the same for the ALEOs. It was noted that given the increasing number of collaborative arrangements involving the Council there were potentially a number of principles which could be developed to strengthen the role of this Committee in relation to such governance arrangements, and that this would be looked at as part of the review of decision-making structures approved by the Council on 17 May 2017 (Art. 291 refers).

Resolved:

- (i) The performance, under the arrangements Following the Public Pound, as detailed in Appendix 1 to Report 17/224, be noted.
- (ii) The draft revised Contract Rules, the revised FPP Code and proposed Practitioners' Toolkit, presented in Appendices 2 and 3 to Report 17/224, be noted prior to being submitted to a future meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee for approval.

*AT THE INVITATION OF THE CONVENER, THE VICE-CONVENER,
COUNCILLOR McCOLE INTRODUCED THE NEXT ITEM*

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371. PROCUREMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17

There was submitted a report by the Depute Chief Executive and Chief Operating Officer (17/219), (1) detailing the progress made by Perth and Kinross Council in delivering the Procurement Strategy, published in December 2015; (2) documenting the achievement of the aims and objectives set out in the Strategy; and (3) demonstrating value through the purchasing decisions taken for the period. It was noted that Report 17/219 had been considered by the Strategic Policy & Resources Committee earlier in the day.

In response to questions, M Mitchell confirmed that the Council's working practices were aligned with legislative and regulatory requirements and that no exceptions could be made that could be perceived as being discriminatory.

Resolved:

The Procurement Annual Report and Action Plan, as detailed at Appendices 1 and 2 to Report 17/219, be noted.

372. HOUSING AND COMMUNITY CARE COMPLAINTS AND CUSTOMER FEEDBACK (Art. 57)

There was submitted a report by the Executive Director (Housing and Community Safety) (17/198): (1) summarising the complaints received between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017 relating to housing services and community care services; (2) providing information on the number of Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints received and some examples of feedback from customer satisfaction surveys; and (3) outlining actions taken to improve services as a result of customer feedback. It was noted that Report 17/198 had been considered by the Housing and Communities Committee on 31 May 2017.

The Convener asked a question in relation to the monitoring of communications / responses, L Cameron advised that management teams were currently revisiting these issues and in response to a question from Councillor Baird, she also confirmed that many services had been subject to transformation the previous year and further work, particularly in relation to home care was also being undertaken with the Community Care Management Team.

Resolved:

- (i) The contents of Report 17/198 and the impact that feedback from customers has had on improving services be noted.
- (ii) The improvement actions noted in Report 17/198 to support and improve how the service handled complaints and improved the customer experience be noted.

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373. FOI PERFORMANCE REPORT 2016-17

There was submitted a report by the Head of Legal and Governance Services providing an overview: (1) of the Council's performance in relation to requests for information under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 for the year 2016-17; and (2) of some of the Council's other information related activities.

Resolved:

- (i) That the Council's performance in respect of processing requests under Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act (FOI(S)A) continued to be very good and on target for 2016-17 be noted.
- (ii) That FOI(S)A helped to provide an assurance of openness and transparency to the public in their dealings with the Council and it is essential that this service continues to operate to a high standard be noted.
- (iii) The Council's policy on directed surveillance and interception of communications be noted.

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.

374. MINUTE OF MEETING OF SOCIAL WORK COMPLAINTS REVIEW COMMITTEE OF 30 MARCH 2017

There was submitted and noted the minute of meeting of the Social Work Complaints Review Committee of 30 March 2017.

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