

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minute of Meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held in the Committee Room, Fourth Floor, Council Building, 2 High Street, Perth on Wednesday 21 November 2012 at 2.00pm.

Present: Councillors A Stewart, D Cuthbert, D Doogan, A Livingstone (substituting for Councillor B Vaughan) and A Younger.

In Attendance: G Taylor, I Innes (until Art 583(ii)), J Jarvie and M Kay (all Chief Executive's Service); B Atkinson, P McAvoy, J Gilchrist (all up to and including Art. 584) and M Cochlan (all Education and Children's Services); J Gilruth, A Taylor and M Weir (all Housing and Community Care) and B Renton (the Environment Service).

Apologies for Absence: Councillors M Barnacle, A MacLellan and B Vaughan and Mr I Jackson.

Councillor A Stewart, Convener, Presiding

581. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

582. MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

(i) Scrutiny Committee

The minute of meeting of the Scrutiny Committee of 19 September 2012 was submitted, approved as a correct record and authorised for signature, subject to the resolution in Article 443 Corporate Risk Management Strategy 2012/13 and Annual Risk Report 2011/12 being corrected to read:

Resolved:

- (i) The Corporate Risk Management Strategy 2012/13 and Annual Risk Report 2011/12 as outlined in Report 12/394 be noted.
- (ii) The Corporate Risks to be managed by the Council in 2012/13 as outlined in Report 12/394 be noted.
- (iii) The performance of Services in managing the Service Risks as outlined in Report 12/394 be noted.

(ii) Audit Sub-Committee

The minute of meeting of the Audit Sub-Committee of 27 June 2012 was submitted and noted. (**Appendix I**)

THE COMMITTEE AGREED TO VARY THE ORDER OF BUSINESS TO ENABLE THE REPORTS RELATING TO EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES TO BE TAKEN CONSECUTIVELY

583. SIX MONTHLY BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN PERFORMANCE EXCEPTION REPORTS

(i) Chief Executive's Service

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive (12/528) reviewing the performance of the Chief Executive's Service against its Business Management and Improvement Plan (BMIP) for the period 1 April 2012 to 30 September 2012. It was noted that Report 12/528 had been accepted by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee earlier in the day.

G Taylor, Head of Democratic Services, was present to answer members' questions on the report.

Councillor Cuthbert requested that a list of those performance indicators for which figures were not available mid-year should be provided for members' information and G Taylor agreed that this information would be included in future six-monthly reports.

Resolved:

The contents of the Chief Executive's Service Six Monthly Performance Exception Report 1 April 2012 to 30 September 2012 be accepted.

I INNES LEFT THE MEETING DURING CONSIDERATION OF THE FOLLOWING ITEM.

(ii) Education and Children's Services (Art. 524)

There was submitted a report by the Executive Director (Education and Children's Services) (12/485) reviewing the performance of Education and Children's Services (BMIP) against the Services' Business Management and Improvement Plan for the period 1 April 2012 to 30 September 2012. It was noted that Report 12/485 had been accepted by the Lifelong Learning Committee on 31 October 2012.

B Atkinson, Depute Director, Education and Children's Services was present to answer members' questions on the report. In relation to a question from Councillor Cuthbert on action being taken to support the business development and promotion of Community Campuses, B Atkinson provided information on action being taken, in conjunction with Live Active Leisure, to review current usage with a view to increasing the range of activity within Community Campuses and advised that a dedicated post had been established at Breadalbane Academy to assess if marketing could achieve results which could be rolled out to other campuses; to examine opportunities for expansion; and to explore further business development. In response to Councillor Cuthbert's suggestion that the business model used in Fife might be helpful, W Atkinson undertook to seek information thereon. In response to a request from Councillor Doogan for a more detailed

breakdown of figures in relation to numbers of reported incidents of aggression and violence in nursery and primary schools, W Atkinson pointed to the expansion of nursery education and the increase in challenging behaviour; and reported on action being taken to (a) develop learning in dealing with autistic spectrum disorders using the expertise of experienced staff; (b) work with staff and trade unions on the provision of support and training; (c) ensure that skilled intervention was provided for those with complex needs; and advised that a sophisticated audit was required to identify what additional support was required.

Councillor Stewart agreed that support should be provided to teaching staff and assistants and, whilst recognising the onus on the Council and other agencies to protect children, the Council had a responsibility to its staff. P McAvoy further advised on action being taken to address challenging behaviour, referring to the two autism outreach officers who visited schools to provide skills training; the development of nurture centres within schools; and reviews carried out by educational psychologists to identify causes of challenging behaviour. Councillor Doogan welcomed the efforts being made in early years; hoped the benefit would be seen at primary school and enquired as to the reasons for figures tailing off at secondary level. B Atkinson advised that, as identified in the reduction in youth crime figures, the importance of early years intervention, both in schools and the community, contributed to a reduction in impact at later stages.

Councillor Stewart cautioned against extrapolating too much from the figures as these could be distorted by the actions of a small number of pupils; pointed to the benefits of Getting it Right for Every Child and suggested that the Scrutiny Committee might consider this area in more depth. B Atkinson advised that the figures related to only 0.78 of the school population.

Councillor Younger requested a breakdown of levels of attendance of secondary pupils and enquired whether absence levels were concentrated in particular years. B Atkinson reported on work being carried out to (a) analyse cases referred to the Attendance Sub-Committee with a view to identifying how the Service could better support and maximise attendance; (b) identify absences at Primary 5 level to prevent more serious problems at a later stage; (c) use link workers to support a positive transition to secondary school; (d) put in place a package of support for more complex needs, and recognising that a small cohort struggled to attend regularly and (e) use More Choices More Chances for older groups. He referred to a national report "Included, Engaged and Involved" and advised that a report was to be submitted to a future meeting of the Lifelong Learning Committee thereon. Councillor Stewart asked that this report also be submitted to the Scrutiny Committee with a presentation on trends in attendance levels.

Resolved:

- (i) The contents of the Education and Children's Services Six Monthly Performance Exception Report 1 April 2012 to 30 September 2012, be accepted.
- (ii) The report on managing school attendance/exclusions to be submitted to a future meeting of the Lifelong Learning Committee to also be submitted to the Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

584. ATTAINMENT IN PERTH AND KINROSS SCHOOLS 2011 (ART. 523)

There was submitted a report by the Executive Director (Education and Children's Services) (12/484) presenting a summary analysis of pupil attainment in Perth and Kinross schools in 2011/2012, specifically in relation to key Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) and attainment measures, and in relation to Curriculum for Excellence progress with learning and achievement. It was noted that Report 12/484 had been accepted by the Lifelong Learning Committee on 31 October 2012.

Councillor Cuthbert enquired as to the impact of the Investment in Learning project on attainment levels and B Atkinson advised that improvement in pupil performance had been seen across all schools and, whilst teachers reported that the new campuses were more conducive to learning, a number of other factors such as ethos, an excellent school community and efforts of staff contributed to the improvement. Councillor Cuthbert enquired further whether the new campuses provided a greater spread of subjects/qualifications and P McAvoy advised that great efforts were being directed towards raising standards; a detailed analysis was being carried out to identify the reasons for improvements, but noted that, whilst it was not possible to have subject specific advisers in every school, peripatetic staff tutors had been appointed to visit schools to provide support.

Resolved:

The contents of Report 12/484 be accepted.

B ATKINSON, P MCAVOY AND J GILCHRIST LEFT THE MEETING AT THIS POINT

585. SIX MONTHLY BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN PERFORMANCE EXCEPTION REPORTS (continued)

(iii) The Environment Service (Art. 553)

There was submitted a report by the Executive Director (Environment) (12/499) reviewing the performance of the Environment Service against the Service's Business Management and Improvement Plan (BMIP) for the period 1 April 2012 to 30 September 2012. It was noted that Report 12/499 had been accepted by the Environment Committee, Community Safety Committee and Enterprise and Infrastructure Committee on 7 November 2012.

B Renton was present to answer members' questions, and reported in more detail on the progress being made by the Service, with a number of transformation projects completed ahead of schedule, and commended staff for their efforts to continue to provide services to the community, particularly those involved in the very recent flooding situation at Comrie and potential flooding at Bridge of Earn. She noted Councillor Cuthbert's earlier request for information to be provided on performance indicators for which figures were not available mid-year.

In response to questions from Councillor Doogan (1) in relation to the development of the economy and promotion of Perth and Kinross as a place to live, work and visit, and how outcomes could be measured, B Renton advised that officers had been working with the Improvement Service on piloting a number of economic benefit measures and on the range of activities to underpin this; (2) how to measure the work of the Business Growth Team, she advised on their work on the Angel's Share initiative, the HUB and business training tourism, with two new business advisers appointed with extensive experience (3) the work of the Highland Renewables Consortium, she advised that this was at an early stage and would have to obtain further detail thereon; (4) the work of the Tay Landscape Partnership and the potential of greater use of the river, she advised that senior officers had been given a presentation by the Partnership on joint working particularly in respect of the joint bid for Heritage Lottery Funding, and work on the core path network; and (5) the household recycling target, B Renton advised this was a Scottish Government target which Perth and Kinross was likely to achieve much earlier thanks to the increasing levels of community recycling, noted the continuing issue of excessive packaging, and confirmed that the impact of the closure of the Bankfoot facility had not been significant, with alternatives being used.

In response to questions from Councillor Livingstone in relation to (1) progress made following Business Week, B Renton advised that the event held in early summer 2012 had proved successful and, following feedback received from businesses and an assessment of the outcomes, changes were being considered for the 2013 event to enable more small businesses to attend. Councillor Stewart reported that comments had been made that the event had been Perth-based and that consideration be given to expanding the event to other locations; (2) what early marketing activities had taken place to maximise opportunities provided by the 2014 Ryder Cup, B Renton advised that the Head of Planning and Regeneration had visited this year's event in Medinah, USA, with Team Scotland, taking promotional materials and noted the opportunity provided by the Junior Ryder Cup taking place in Blairgowrie prior to the adult competition, and was working with Team Scotland to secure a legacy from the event.

In response to a question from Councillor Cuthbert on disabled access to Council buildings, pointing to difficulties faced by a wheelchair user at Glenearn Community Campus, B Renton agreed to investigate his

concern, but noted that all new buildings complied with relevant legislation.

Councillors Livingstone, Doogan and Younger asked for further information on the work undertaken by the Vacant Property Development Officer since her appointment, and B Renton reported on the mapping exercise carried out of properties in Perth, with a view to bringing back into use both vacant housing and commercial property, reported on Conservation Area Regeneration Funding made available by Historic Scotland for the regeneration of historic centres, and advised that a report would be submitted to a future meeting of the Enterprise and Infrastructure Committee on progress made on vacant property. Whilst noting that funding had been provided for work in Perth, Councillor Cuthbert suggested that local groups such as community councils could be asked to carry out an exercise in their areas to identify vacant properties which could be brought back into use. Councillor Livingstone pointed to the success achieved by the active Blairgowrie Merchants Association. B Renton advised that the focus of the Vacant Property Development Officer in Perth was on empty upper floors above retail premises.

Resolved:

The contents of the Environment Service Six Monthly Performance Exception Report 1 April 2012 to 30 September 2012 be accepted.

(iv) Housing and Community Care (Art. 519)

There was submitted a report by the Executive Director (Housing and Community Care) (12/482) reviewing the performance of Housing and Community Care against the Service's Business Management and Improvement Plan (BMIP) for the period 1 April 2012 to 30 September 2012. It was noted that Report 12/482 had been accepted by the Housing and Health Committee on 31 October 2012.

Resolved:

The contents of the Housing and Community Care Six Monthly Performance Exception Summary for 1 April 2012 to 30 September 2012 be accepted.

586. REPORT ON SOCIAL CARE AND SOCIAL WORK IMPROVEMENT SCOTLAND INSPECTIONS (SCSWIS)

There was submitted a report by the Executive Director (Housing and Community Care) (12/480) advising of the key findings of inspections carried out in Perth and Kinross by SCSWIS between December 2011 and August 2012. It was noted that Report 12/480 had been accepted by the Housing and Health Committee on 31 October 2012.

J Gilruth was present to answer members' questions and in relation to (1) a question from Councillor Livingstone as to the grades awarded in respect of

Beechgrove House and Dalweem Care Home Service, he advised that inspections had very stretching targets and noted that Beechgrove House and other facilities were in a transition period of considerable change which was reflected in the scoring; (2) a query from Councillor Stewart in relation to ensuring that all risk assessments were completed for service users, particularly with the wide range of activities attended outwith the care environment entailing a great many risk assessments, he confirmed this was a significant piece of work, as not only had the risk of the activity to be assessed but also the level of risk associated with the particular individual; and (3) a request from Councillor Cuthbert for information to be provided on other inspections carried out outwith the six month period covered by Report 12/480, he explained that inspections on all facilities were carried out on a cyclical basis. A Taylor suggested this information could be incorporated into an appendix to future reports showing grades across all facilities.

Resolved:

The contents of Report 12/480 be noted.

