

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minute of meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held virtually via Microsoft Teams on Wednesday 5 August 2020 at 9.30am.

Present: Councillors S McCole, C Ahern, S Donaldson (substituting for Councillor A Parrott), D Illingworth, A Jarvis, G Laing, T McEwan, C Purves, F Sarwar and C Stewart.

In Attendance: B Renton, Executive Director (Housing and Environment); S Devlin, Executive Director (Education and Children's Services); K Donaldson, Depute Director (Corporate and Democratic Services); K McNamara, Depute Director (Housing and Environment); J Pepper, Depute Director (Education and Children's Services); L Simpson, J Clark, L Ferguson, K Johnston, D Williams, A Taylor and B Parker (all Corporate and Democratic Services).

Apologies: Councillors M Barnacle, H Coates, A Parrott and C Reid.

Councillor S McCole, Convener, Presiding.

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

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

Councillor McCole expressed thanks to Councillor Laing as her predecessor as Convener of the Scrutiny Committee, for his tenure as Convener. Councillor McCole also expressed thanks to officers of the Council and the Health and Social Care Partnership for their work throughout Emergency Powers and the COVID-19 Pandemic.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors S Donaldson and C Purves both declared a non-financial interest in Item P1.

3. MINUTE OF THE MEETING OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE OF 5 FEBRUARY 2020

The minute of meeting of the Scrutiny Committee of 5 February 2020 was submitted, approved as a correct record and authorised for signature, with the correction that Councillor Purves was not present.

4. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2019/20

There was submitted a report by the Head of Legal and Governance Services (20/130) providing the Committee an opportunity to review the Annual Governance Statement for the financial year 2019/20, which provides assurance as to the effectiveness of the Council's governance framework and in particular the system of internal control.

In response to a query from Councillor Donaldson regarding the Corporate Workforce Plan, K Donaldson, Depute Director (Corporate and Democratic Services) advised that a review of the Corporate Workforce Plan was already underway prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic, but had now become a much more fundamental plan in line with the Perth and Kinross Offer. K Donaldson advised members that the Plan would be brought forward to a meeting of the Council at the earliest opportunity.

In response to a query from Councillor Sarwar regarding community engagement and strategy to communicate with community stakeholders, L Simpson highlighted community mobilisation through the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly with regards to the sense of individuals undertaking shielding within communities. L Simpson added that a database for volunteers was created and links with PKAVS were utilised. L Simpson, Head of Legal and Governance, advised that there was an ongoing need for continued engagement, with particular regards to food need.

In response to query from Councillor Laing the assurance process for ALEOs, L Simpson advised that ALEOs did not submit an Annual Governance Statement to the Council, but instead went through a different assurance process.

Resolved:

The contents of Report 20/130, be noted.

5. COVID-19 RISK MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

There was submitted a report by the Head of Legal and Governance Services (20/131) informing the Scrutiny Committee of arrangements in place to manage risks from the COVID-19 pandemic, and to provide assurance that COVID-19 risks will continue to be considered and monitored in line with the Council's established risk management processes.

In response to a query from Councillor Ahern regarding the recommended removal of Information Security Risk, K McNamara, Depute Director (Housing and Environment) that this would be moving to the service risk register, in order for the risk to be managed in a different way.

Resolved:

The contents of Report 20/131, be noted.

6. RECORD OF DECISIONS UNDER EMERGENCY POWERS

There was submitted for consideration a record of the decisions taken by the Council under Emergency Powers.

In response to a query from Councillor Sarwar regarding Free School Meals payments and the availability of payments to those families whose children take a packed lunch, S Devlin, Executive Director (Education and Children's Services) advised that discussions were ongoing with parents to establish circumstances.

In response to a query from Councillor McEwan regarding whether the decision to not pursue outstanding Council Tax during Emergency Powers was a temporary or permanent measure, K Donaldson advised that this was a temporary measure, and that recovery of Council Tax was now being undertaken.

Resolved:

The Record of Decisions Taken Under Emergency Powers, be noted.

THERE FOLLOWED A FIVE MINUTE RECESS

IT WAS AGREED THAT THE PUBLIC AND PRESS SHOULD BE EXCLUDED DURING CONSIDERATION OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS IN ORDER TO AVOID THE DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION WHICH IS EXEMPT IN TERMS OF SCHEDULE 7A TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (SCOTLAND) ACT 1973.

P1. RECORD OF DECISIONS UNDER EMERGENCY POWERS

A presentation was delivered regarding the present financial position of Horscross Arts Ltd.