

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minute of Meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held in the Committee Room, Fourth Floor, Council Building, 2 High Street, Perth on Wednesday 19 September 2012 at 2.00pm.

Present: Councillors A Stewart, B Vaughan, M Barnacle, D Cuthbert, D Doogan, and A Younger.

In Attendance: D Burke, L Cameron and J Mayglothling (Housing and Community Care); B Atkinson and J Gilchrist (both Education and Children's Services); B Renton and S MacKenzie (both the Environment Service); G Taylor, M Cochlan and P Frazer (all Chief Executive's Service).

Also Attending: J Jarvie (Chief Executive's Service)

Apology for Absence: Councillor A MacLellan.

Councillor A Stewart, Convener, Presiding

440. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

441. MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

(i) Scrutiny Committee

The Minute of Meeting of the Scrutiny Committee of 20 June 2012 was submitted, approved as a correct record and authorised for signature.

(ii) Audit Sub-Committee

The Minute of Meeting of the Audit Sub-Committee of 29 February 2012 was submitted and noted.

(ii) Special Audit Sub-Committee

The Minute of Special Meeting of the Audit Sub-Committee of 27 March 2012 was submitted and noted.

442. ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2011/12

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive (12/406) providing an overview of how the Perth and Kinross Community Planning Partnership had performed against the Single Outcome Agreement 2009-2011 and how Perth and Kinross Council had performed against the Council's Corporate Plan 2009-12 and in delivering Best Value for the period 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012.

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Councillor Doogan, referring to Local Outcome 4: Employment, commended the good results from The Hub, the multi-agency initiative, in getting people back into work. He was interested to know how The Hub's success compared with Jobcentre Plus and if it complemented or duplicated the work of Jobcentre Plus. B Renton advised that The Hub had a good success rate in comparison to other organisations; however, there should be no duplication with Jobcentre Plus as each dealt with different client groups.

In response to a further question from Councillor Doogan in respect of the indicator for New Business Bank Accounts; B Renton advised that the indicator was used to try and track the level of new business in Perth and Kinross, whilst acknowledging that it was difficult to keep track of the number of businesses which did not survive. B Renton continued that in respect of employment opportunities, Perth and Kinross was benchmarked against a number of local authorities designated by Audit Scotland. There was a focus on bringing higher value jobs into the area including: (i) setting up academies to support local businesses in the service sector to develop their staff; (ii) encouraging inward mobility of both people and businesses; and (iii) attracting more people to spend their leisure time here.

Councillor A Younger, identified Local Outcome 2: Infrastructure and Transport as crucial to the future of the area and, whilst noting that performance was level, queried why more progress was not being made. B Renton advised that infrastructure projects were expensive to take forward, particularly in the current economic climate; however, work on the Gleneagles station junction was progressing and a decision was awaited on the proposed Freight Consolidation Centre in Perth.

Councillor M Barnacle acknowledged the impact of current financial constraints; however, he expressed his personal view that the Proposed Local Development Plan left a lot to be desired in terms of infrastructure development in Kinross-shire particularly in respect of the A997 and rail links.

Councillor Vaughan commented that the report: (i) did not refer to Perth College in respect of skills training for young people; (ii) appeared to be centred very much on Perth and Kinross Council; and (iii) did not seem to reflect the partnership element. B Atkinson responded that some agencies collect different information in different ways making progress slow in developing an integrated information gathering system across all partners. He acknowledged that the Annual Report should focus on and reflect partnership-working through the SOA, and work was ongoing to develop indicators in order to enable this.

B Atkinson advised that new ideas were always under discussion on cultural events to attract people into Perth. Discussions were taking place with the new curator at the Victoria and Albert Museum in Dundee in order to develop the potential to draw visitors to Dundee into Perth as well. A report in this respect would be submitted to a future meeting of the Lifelong Learning Committee.

It was noted that a report on Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) would be submitted to a future meeting of the Lifelong Learning Committee.

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Resolved:

- (i) The Council's Annual Performance Report 2011/12 as detailed in Appendix A to Report 12/406 be approved.

***443. CORPORATE RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2012/13 AND ANNUAL RISK REPORT 2011/12**

There was submitted a report by the Depute Chief Executive (12/394) presenting the Council's: (1) Corporate Risk Management Strategy 2012/13; (2) Corporate Risk Profile 2012/13; and (3) Annual Risk Report 2011/12. It was noted that report had been approved by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee earlier in the day.

Councillor Vaughan commented that the report had been submitted to the meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources (SP&R) Committee on Wednesday 19 September 2012 for approval prior to being submitted to this Committee for scrutiny and comment. She reported that having spoken to Councillor Miller, as Convener of the SP&R Committee, he was happy to receive comments at the next meeting of SP&R in respect of the report.

In a response to a question from Councillor Vaughan, D Burke advised that alcohol misuse could not be dealt with by Perth and Kinross Council as a single entity, and came within the remit of the Community Planning Partnership (CPP). The risk register should clearly reflect the Council's responsibilities where appropriate and what should be covered by the CPP. B Atkinson clarified that whilst there was a reputational risk should the public perceive, wrongly, that PKC was not carrying out its responsibilities; reputational risk did not constitute a corporate risk in itself.

Councillors Cuthbert and Doogan sought clarification on the process for assessing the effectiveness of the controls detailed under each risk and how disseminating information to the public on potential cuts in services was going to be managed. D Burke advised that evidence based information was used to measure effectiveness but that it would be a legitimate role for this Committee to select and seek further evidence, and that the current Community Engagement Strategy provided an effective vehicle for keeping the public informed.

G Taylor advised that a communications plan would be put in place in respect of the forthcoming revenue budget process. It was agreed that the controls associated with the corporate risk on effectively managing changing financial circumstances could be strengthened to reflect the need for specific consideration of communications and engagement.

Resolved:

- (i) The Corporate Risk Management Strategy 2012/13 and Annual Risk Report 2011/12 as outlined in Report 12/394 be approved.
- (ii) The Corporate Risks to be managed by the Council in 2012/13 as outlined in Report 12/394 be approved.

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- (iii) The Executive Director, Housing and Community Care be instructed to submit a report on communication risks to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.

***444. REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS, DEATHS, MARRIAGES AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS – INSPECTION REPORTS BY NATIONAL RECORDS OF SCOTLAND AND FUTURE PROVISION IN COUPAR ANGUS**

There was submitted a report by the Head of Democratic Services (12/247) commenting on the annual inspection reports from the National Records of Scotland and setting out proposals on the future provision of registration services in Coupar Angus. It was noted that the report had been approved by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee earlier in the day.

In response to a question from Councillor Cuthbert, G Taylor advised that the continuing poor performance of the provider at Coupar Angus meant that there was no alternative but to terminate the current arrangements. G Taylor confirmed that on-going monitoring of registration paperwork was undertaken by Registration Service at the main Perth office.

Resolved:

The contents of Report 12/247 be noted.

445. HOUSING AND COMMUNITY CARE (COMPLAINTS REPORT) CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

There was submitted a report by the Executive Director (Housing and Community Care) (12/336) outlining: (1) complaints received between April 2011 and March 2012 across Housing and Community Care; (2) the number of informal complaints received and examples of feedback from customer satisfaction surveys; and (3) actions required to improve services.

I INNES ENTERED THE MEETING AT THIS POINT

I Innes advised that there was a general issue in respect of what represented a complaint; for example, should service requests which were resolved quickly be recorded as a complaint. The new complaints system to be introduced by the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman would require almost every contact to be recorded as a complaint. There were concerns that the new system would not be able to identify what were genuine complaints or multiple complaints about the same issue.

D Burke confirmed that he was not yet in a position to make a recommendation in respect of the recording all incoming calls to the Customer Contact Centre as the costs involved in doing so may be disproportionate to the benefits.

Resolved:

The contents of Report 12/336 be noted.

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446. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND AUDIT SUB-COMMITTEE FORWARD PLANNER 2012/13

There was submitted a report by the Depute Director, The Environment Service (12/407) presenting a forward planner for Perth and Kinross Council during 2012/13.

Councillor Vaughan noted that the planner did not include the BMIPS in March 2013. B Renton advised that this was due to the difficulty in setting targets in advance of the Annual Performance Report which was dependent on the end of the financial year. However, it may be possible to develop a process whereby elected members could review a draft version of BMIP, prior to finalisation by Services' Senior Management Teams.

Councillor Barnacle referred to the previous meeting of the Committee, at which he had raised issues about the planning system and would be meeting with J Valentine, Executive Director (Environment) on 21 September 2012 to discuss his concerns. Councillor Barnacle added that he would like to see improvements in the standard of reports submitted to Development Management Committee. B Renton advised that the Service was aware of the issues and, following a review of resources, would be appointing a complaints officer to manage the process.

Resolved:

- (i) The Scrutiny Committee and Audit Sub-Committee Forward Planner, attached as Appendix 1 to Report 12/407 be agreed.

447. FOURTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REVIEW

There was a verbal update by Councillor Stewart, Convener on preparations for the fourth Scrutiny Committee Review. The review process was a very important part of the Committee's work and the Convener would be writing to all interested parties asking for suggestions of what areas to review. The deadline for submissions would be the end of October 2012.