



Internal Audit Report
Education and Children's Services
Place Based Scrutiny
Consultancy Assignment No. 15-23
February 2016

Final Report

Finance Division
Corporate and Democratic Services
Perth & Kinross Council
Blackfriars Development Centre
North Port
Perth PH1 5LU

Internal Audit

“Internal Audit is an independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve an organisation’s operations. It helps an organisation accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes”. Public Sector Internal Auditing Standards (PSIAS)

On 27th March 2013, the Council’s Audit Committee approved the PSIAS as the relevant standard for its Internal Audit activity.

Consultancy work aims to support management in building in controls at the outset for the implementation of systems, processes and procedures and also for the provision of specific assurance for particular projects or issues at the request of management. This approach is consistent with the PSIAS.

Background and Introduction

This consultancy assignment was carried out as part of the audit plan for 2015/16, which was approved by the Audit Committee on 1 April 2015.

The assignment reviewed Placed Based scrutiny documentation. Officers responsible for leading the process were interviewed during February 2016. This Report details the outcomes of Internal Audit’s review.

Scope and Limitations

The indicative scope of the consultation assignment, agreed by the Committee, was to provide advice and support on place based scrutiny.

The final scope was to review the work that had been carried out by Council officers in respect of the locality based project which was initially carried out as a pilot in East Perthshire. This included a review of “next steps” in line with the Report 15/418 to Council on 7 October 2015.

Work Undertaken

This report provides an overview of the work carried out by Council officers in respect of the locality based project (Place Based scrutiny) which was carried out as a pilot in East Perthshire. This report is based on the results of discussions with officers and as a result of the undernoted audit work.

Report 15/418 presented to Council on 7 October 2015 stated that in early 2015, the Council and its Community Planning Partners collaborated with national scrutiny bodies to devise and assess a methodology for the evaluation and scrutiny of how community planning is operating at a local level, with a particular focus on the four pillars of public service reform – prevention, partnership, people and performance.

The above report is supported by a comprehensive 79 page paper which details information about the East Perthshire locality, the economy, jobs, health and housing pressures, ethnicity, early learning, school attainment, sport and active recreation, commuting patterns and the impact of welfare reform.

Report 15/418 also states that the Place Based Scrutiny pilot was undertaken on behalf of the national Strategic Scrutiny Group (SSG) at the request of the Chief Executive. The report explaining that the SSG, of which the Chief Executive is a member, comprises of Scotland's main public sector scrutiny bodies, and was

established in 2008 following publication of the Crerar Report to support better co-ordinated, more proportionate and risk-based scrutiny of public services in Scotland.

The area that the Council chose for this work was in East Perthshire: Blairgowrie/Ratray, Alyth, Coupar Angus (Strathmore) and The Glens.

The External Evaluation Team was made up of representatives of Education Scotland; The Care Inspectorate; The Scottish Housing Regulator; Audit Scotland; Healthcare Improvement Scotland; Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary; Fire Inspectorate and the University of Glasgow.

The Internal Evaluation Team was made up of representatives of Education and Children's Services; The Environment Service; Housing & Community Care (All Perth and Kinross Council); Scottish Fire & Rescue Service; Police Scotland; the NHS and Perth & Kinross Association of Voluntary Service.

The minutes of the Council meeting state that: "the learning from the pilot be shared with the National Strategic Scrutiny Group, the findings from the pilot be shared with the stakeholders involved in the pilot and used to further improve service delivery in Eastern Perthshire and the findings and methodology contained in Report 15/418 be used to inform future approaches to locality planning for consideration by the Community Planning Partnership Board."

The minutes of the National Strategic Scrutiny Group meetings of 23 April and 22 October 2015 evidence that the Group were presented with details of the approach. The minutes also state that the findings from the pilot and any issues raised from the pilot will be reflected in the SSG strategic development project.

The Service also confirmed that the findings from the work were reported within the Council to the Education & Children's Services Senior Management Team, the Corporate Management Group and the Executive Officer Team and that feedback from the Place Based Scrutiny has been fed back to the Community Planning Partnership Board.

In addition, Report 15/535 of 18 November 2015 presented to Council regarding Community Planning entitled "The Journey Over The Next 5 Years" stated that a strong evidence base about local priorities and needs is fundamental to effective local community planning: this is referred to as the locality profile, or 'Story of Place'. The report added that the recent Place Based Scrutiny exercise in East Perthshire identified the key data and evidence for effective local community planning.

The Service advised that the methodology was to take a Total Place approach to a community and ask Community Planning Partnership Partners and Inspectors to step out of their usual thematic roles to answer the questions "what is it like to live in this community?"

The Service confirmed that the key learning from the Place Based scrutiny pilot which has been applied to new locality working arrangements is the need to view a community holistically and from the perspective of individual community members. Typically data is gathered thematically and is concerned with deficit issues. Taking a total place perspective facilitates a richer understanding of the locality and the opportunities and challenges contained therein. Local community planning partnerships are being planned and will commence in April 2016. A fundamental principle will be having a strong story of place and the view of the community alongside an asset based approach to community.

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The next steps include the newly formed Local Community Planning Partnership for East Perthshire reviewing its “Story of Place” in its early meetings and considering the priorities for its local area action plan. The improvement actions identified in the Place Based Scrutiny will feed into and inform this process. The Service advised that this will be presented to the May meeting of the above.

The Place Based Scrutiny work has influenced thinking behind and development of the Story of Place work stream as well as an “open data” review which is part of the Transformation programme. This review is aimed at delivering a work stream which will transform how the Community Planning Partnership uses data and intelligence to support developing strategic priorities for communities across Perth and Kinross.

Opinion

As a result of this review, Internal Audit is able to provide assurance over the work carried out by Council officers in respect of the locality based project (place based scrutiny) which was carried out as a pilot in East Perthshire.

Future Internal Audit involvement regarding this topic will be based on a risk assessment which is undertaken as part of the risk based audit plan which is presented annually to Audit Committee to determine the priorities for internal audit activity.

Acknowledgements

Internal Audit acknowledges with thanks the co-operation of staff and management in Education and Children’s Services during this audit.

Feedback

Internal Audit welcomes feedback from management, in connection with this audit or with the Internal Audit service in general.

Distribution

This report has been distributed to:

B Malone,

J Fyffe, Senior Depute Chief Executive, ECS (Equality, Community Planning and Public Service Reform)

J Walker, Depute Chief Executive (Corporate and Community Development Services) and Chief Operating Officer

S Devlin, Director, Education & Children’s Services

F Robertson, Head of Cultural and Community Services

D Stokoe, Service Manager, Communities

P Davison, Corporate Research and Information Manager

K McNamara, Head of Strategic Commissioning & Organisational Development

G Taylor, Head of Democratic Services

P Dickson, Complaints & Governance Officer

External Audit

Authorisation

The auditor for this assignment was D McCreadie. The supervising auditor was M Morrison.

This report is authorised for issue:

Jacqueline Clark
Chief Internal Auditor
Date: 25 February 2016

