

Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee

ABERDEEN, 23 March 2023. Minute of Meeting of the AUDIT, RISK AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE. Present:- Councillor Crockett, Convener; and Councillors Ali, Allard, Bonsell, Bouse, Fairfull, Farquhar (as substitute for Councillor Houghton), McLellan, Massey, Nicoll, Radley, Mrs Stewart and van Sweeden.

The agenda and reports associated with this minute can be found [here](#).

Please note that if any changes are made to this minute at the point of approval, these will be outlined in the subsequent minute and this document will not be retrospectively altered.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST OR TRANSPARENCY STATEMENTS

1. There were no declarations of interest or transparency statements.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING OF 2 FEBRUARY 2023

2. The Committee had before it the minute of their previous meeting of 2 February 2023.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the minute as a correct record.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS PLANNER

3. The Committee had before it the Committee Business Planner as prepared by the Interim Chief Officer – Governance.

In response to a question relating to whether there would be scope to add any urgent internal audits if the Committee requested them, the Chief Internal Auditor advised that where there were additional priorities to those set out in the Internal Audit Plan 2023-2026, he would accept those at the Committee's request.

The Committee resolved:-

to note the content of the business planner.

ALEO ASSURANCE HUB WORKPLAN 2023 AND TERMS OF REFERENCE - COM/23/073

4. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Commissioning which presented the Arm's Length External Organisations (ALEO) Assurance Hub workplan for 2023 including the dates for reporting.

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The report recommended:-

that the Committee -

- (a) note the workplan for the ALEO Assurance Hub in 2023 which had been consulted upon with the ALEOs and the relevant Conveners; and
- (b) note the Terms of Reference for the ALEO Assurance Hub which had been amended slightly to reflect revisions to the Committee structure and to include bp Aberdeen Hydrogen Energy Limited within the Hub's oversight arrangements.

In response to a question relating to the ALEO Strategic Partnership, the Chief Officer – Finance advised that the meetings were an opportunity to speak to senior managers in order to get an understanding of the context in which the ALEO's and the Council were operating to and to get regular updates on the challenges the ALEO's were experiencing.

In response to a question relating to whether ALEO's complete Equality Impact Assessments, the Assurance Manager advised that there was not a requirement for ALEO's to complete these and that as part of the governance arrangements, the Assurance Hub complete checks around decision making

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations contained in the report.

CORPORATE RISK REGISTER, ASSURANCE MAPS AND INSPECTIONS PLANNER - COM/23/070

5. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Commissioning which presented the Corporate Risk Register, Cluster Assurance Maps and Inspections Planner to provide assurance on the Council's overall system of risk management.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee -

- (a) note the Corporate Risk Register as set out in Appendix A;
- (b) note the Cluster Assurance Maps provided at Appendix B; and
- (c) note the Inspections planner provided at Appendix C.

In response to a question relating to the target risk appetite relating to Environment/Climate and whether the rating in this report and the next report were the same thing, the Corporate Risk Lead advised that there were different ratings, one relating to longer term risks that would have a detrimental impact and the other that was a threat to the delivery of Council Services impacted by Climate Change. The Climate and Sustainability Policy Team Leader advised that an Averse risk rating was restrictive and would restrict opportunities that the Council would want to pursue to progress the Net Zero agenda.

In response to a question relating to Health and Safety Compliance and whether the control actions would be complete by the dates provided, the Assurance Manager

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advised that digital elements required to be put in place and that actions should be complete by 31 May 2023.

In response to a question relating to whether a list of Acronyms could be provided for future reports, it was noted that this would be included.

In response to a question relating to whether risks relating to Covid, Brexit and the Invasion of Ukraine could be separated, the Director of Commissioning advised that it was difficult to isolate those risks and where possible this had been done.

In response to a question relating to the Membership of the Risk Board, the Assurance Manager advised that the Board was chaired by the Interim Chief Officer – Governance and the members were Chief Officers, a representative from the Health and Social Care Partnership and the Chief Internal Auditor.

In response to a question relating to the Membership of the Climate Change Oversight Group, the Climate and Sustainability Policy Team Leader advised that the members were Chief Officers and Team Leaders from across the Council that had actions within the Climate Change Plan.

In response to a question relating to Community Resilience and whether the Council had approached groups in the wider community, the Assurance Manager advised that there had been extensive work done in this area, with three Community Resilience Groups established with additional work being undertaken across the City to engage and establish additional resilience groups.

In response to a question relating to the number of people on the City Persons at Risk Database and what the criteria was to be placed in the database, the Assurance Manager advised that she would provide the information on the numbers of people outwith the meeting and advised that the criteria was based on those that were medically vulnerable and was based on data provided from health colleagues.

In response to a question relating to the Net Zero Aberdeen Route Map and the target of 2045 and whether the Council were making rapid enough progress to achieve the target, the Climate and Sustainability Policy Team Leader advised that the target of 2045 was a national target and that the Council were progressing work programmes to deliver the agreed actions to reach the target.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that the Assurance Manager would provide the Committee with details on the number of people on the City Persons at Risk Database; and
- (ii) to otherwise approve the recommendations contained in the report.

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RISK APPETITE STATEMENT ANNUAL REVIEW - COM/23/071

6. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Commissioning which presented the Council's updated Risk Appetite Statement (RAS).

The report recommended:-

that the Committee -

- (a) approve the updated Risk Appetite Statement as attached at Appendix A; and
- (b) note the progress made towards embedding the RAS during 2022 and the training and engagement activities planned for 2023.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to remove the word 'however' from the overarching statement under the strategic heading; and
- (ii) to otherwise approve the recommendations contained in the report.

BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLANS ANNUAL REVIEW - COM/23/069

7. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Commissioning which provided the annual assurance report on the Council's Business Continuity arrangements that were required to comply with the requirements of a Category 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

The report recommended:-

to note the activities undertaken in 2022 and planned in 2023 to review, exercise and improve the Council's Business Continuity arrangements.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendation contained in the report.

SCOTTISH PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN DECISIONS AND INSPECTOR OF CREMATORIA COMPLAINT DECISIONS - CUS/23/090

8.

With reference to article 9 of the minute of its meeting of 13 December 2022, the Committee had before it a report by the Director of Customer Services which provided information on all Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) and Inspector of Cremations decisions made in relation to Aberdeen City Council since the last reporting cycle, to provide assurance that complaints and Scottish Welfare Fund applications were being handled appropriately.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee note the details of the report.

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In response to a question relating to the number of Scottish Welfare Fund applications, the Revenue and Benefits Manager advised that there had been 17,500 applications submitted to date in the financial year 2022/2023.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendation contained in the report.

INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT - IA/23/002

9. The Committee had before it a report by the Chief Internal Auditor which provided an update on the progress against the approved Internal Audit plans, audit recommendations follow up and other relevant matters for the Committee to be aware of.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee -

- (a) note the progress of the Internal Audit Plan; and
- (b) note the progress that management has made with implementing recommendations agreed in Internal Audit reports.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations contained in the report.

INTEGRATED JOINT BOARD DATA SHARING - IA/AC2302

10. The Committee had before it a report by the Chief Internal Auditor which presented an audit in relation to IJB Data Sharing which was undertaken to ensure that the IJB had appropriate assurance over the arrangements/ procedures for data sharing between the Partners (Aberdeen City Council and NHS Grampian) and other agencies responsible for delivering health and social care arrangements in respect of delegated functions and in line with the IJB's strategic directions. The report had already been presented to the IJB Risk, Audit and Performance Committee.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee review, discuss and comment on the issues raised within this report and the attached appendix.

The Committee resolved:-

to endorse the recommendations for improvement contained in the appendix as agreed by the relevant function.

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LEASE FINANCING - IA/AC2308

11. The Committee had before it a report by the Chief Internal Auditor which presented an audit in relation to Lease Financing which was undertaken to ensure that lease financing decisions were based on sound business and financial criteria and that appropriate control was exercised over lease agreements, payments and record keeping.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee review, discuss and comment on the issues raised within this report and the attached appendix.

The Committee resolved:-

to endorse the recommendations for improvement contained in the appendix as agreed by the relevant function.

FOLLOWING THE PUBLIC POUND - IA/AC2303

12. The Committee had before it a report by the Chief Internal Auditor which presented an audit in relation to Following the Public Pound which was undertaken to ensure that there was proper accountability for public funds used in delivering services, irrespective of the means of service delivery.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee review, discuss and comment on the issues raised within this report and the attached appendix.

The Committee resolved:-

to endorse the recommendations for improvement contained in the appendix as agreed by the relevant function.

BENEFITS QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESS - AC2311

13. The Committee had before it a report by the Chief Internal Auditor which presented an audit in relation to Benefits Quality Assurance which was undertaken to ensure the Council's quality assurance processes over rent allowances, rent rebates and council tax reduction benefits ensure benefit claims are supported, accurately calculated, verified and properly recorded for subsidy purposes.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee review, discuss and comment on the issues raised within this report and the attached appendix.

The Committee resolved:-

(i) to congratulate staff on the positive outcome of the audit; and

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- (ii) to otherwise endorse the recommendations for improvement contained in the appendix as agreed by the relevant function.

INTERNAL AUDIT CHARTER - IA/23/003

14. The Committee had before it a report by the Chief Internal Auditor which presented the Internal Audit Charter.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee approve the Internal Audit Charter.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendation contained in the report.

INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2023-2026 - IA/23/004

15. The Committee had before it a report by the Chief Internal Auditor which presented the Internal Audit Plan for 2023-2026.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee approve the attached Internal Audit Plan for 2023-2026.

In response to a question relating to current internal audit staffing resources, the Chief Internal Auditor advised that his team was fully resourced at present and that there were some contingencies built into the internal audit plan.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendation contained in the report.

- **COUNCILLOR BARNEY CROCKETT, Convener**