

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Council
DATE	19 th August 2015
LEAD OFFICER	Chief Executive
TITLE OF REPORT	Accounts Commission Statutory Report
REPORT NUMBER	OCE/15/028
CHECKLIST COMPLETED	Yes/No

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report brings before the Council the Accounts Commission's report published on 2nd July 2015 following the Best Value audit undertaken by Audit Scotland on the Council during the first half of 2015.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Council:

- i. considers the Commission's findings; and
- ii. agrees to receive update reports from the Chief Executive at future meetings of the Council as appropriate

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The report has no specific financial implications.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

The Council has a number of statutory requirements to meet in relation to the Accounts Commission's findings.

The Council must consider the findings within three months of receiving them and this duty must be discharged by the Council and not by a committee, sub-committee or officer.

At least seven clear days before the meeting, there must be published in a newspaper circulating in the City a notice stating the time and place of the meeting, indicating that it is to be held to consider the findings of the Commission and describing the nature of those findings.

After the Council has met, the Commission must be notified of any decisions made and the Council must also publish in a newspaper circulating in the City a notice containing a summary, approved by the Commission, of the Council's decisions.

These requirements are being met by the Council.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

Attached as Appendix 1 is the Accounts Commission's report on Aberdeen City Council following a Best Value audit undertaken on the Council by Audit Scotland on behalf of the Controller of Audit.

The audit work was undertaken during the early months of 2015, the Controller of Audit's report was considered by the Accounts Commission at its meeting on 11th June 2015 and the Commission's findings were published on 2nd July 2015.

The Commission stresses the need for the Council "to continue its momentum, to evidence improvements and to ensure that these are firmly embedded throughout the council".

"In particular the council needs to:

- ensure the council's vision is translated into clear objectives and targets with links to service plans
- take further steps to encourage and consolidate elected members' ownership of the council vision
- make better use of the development framework for elected members so that members' development needs are being met to help them fulfil their roles
- ensure elected members are receiving consistent information on service performance to enable them to discharge their scrutiny role effectively
- review and strengthen arrangements for employee engagement and communication to ensure all employees have a full understanding of the council's vision and priorities."

The Commission also notes that it is "encouraged by the council's self-awareness in recognising how it needs to improve". In this light, it is the intention to ensure that the findings and the related areas for improvement noted in the Controller of Audit's report inform the work underway within the Council to refresh and improve service planning, performance management and reporting and employee engagement. All these strands of work will be reported as required at the appropriate time to elected members.

At the same time, it should be noted that the Group Leaders have agreed to provide oversight in relation to the design and the delivery of the elected member development framework and it now forms a standing agenda item at their regular meetings.

The Chair of the Accounts Commission will meet with the Group Leaders at the end of August. The meeting will offer the opportunity for the Council to feedback to the Commission on the findings, to discuss with the Commission how the Council proposes to address the findings, to confirm any next steps and to review the audit process.

The meeting will also provide an opportunity for the Commission and the Council to establish the most appropriate way in which the latter can ensure that the Controller of Audit receives timeous and regular updates to reassure him of the progress being made in addressing the findings.

6. IMPACT

The subject matter of the report is relevant to the delivery by the Council of all its policies, strategies and plans. The report is likely to be of interest to the public.

7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

Any risks that emerge through addressing the Accounts Commission's findings will be addressed through mitigation activity and will be reported as appropriate to future meetings of the Council.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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