

Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee

ABERDEEN, 2 February 2023. Minute of Meeting of the AUDIT, RISK AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE. Present:- Councillor Macdonald, Convener; and Councillors Ali, Bonsell, Fairfull, McLellan, MacGregor (as substitute for Councillor Allard), Massey, Nicoll, Radley, Mrs Stewart, van Sweeden and Yuill (as substitute for Councillor Bouse).

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. At this juncture, in the interests of transparency the following statement was made:

Councillor Bonsell advised that she had a connection in relation to agenda items 9.3 (External Audit Report) and 9.4 (Annual Accounts for those Registered Charities where the Council were the Sole Trustee) due to her being a member of the Guildry and Mortification Funds Committee, having applied the objective test, she did not consider that she had an interest and would not be withdrawing from the meeting for the items.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING OF 13 DECEMBER 2022

2. The Committee had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 13 December 2022.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to approve the minute as a correct record; and
- (ii) in relation to article 14, resolution (i) from the minute of its meeting of 27 September 2022, to note that the response issued by email earlier today, would be made available to the public.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS PLANNER

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

The Committee resolved:-

to note the content of the Committee Business Planner.

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USE OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ANNUAL REPORT - COM/23/031

4. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Commissioning which provided an overview of the Council's use of investigatory powers during 2022, particularly focussing on the Committees role in respect of assurance and sought confirmation that the Use of Investigatory Powers Policy was for purpose.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee -

- (a) notes the overview of the Council's use of investigatory powers during the calendar year 2022, as set out in this report; and
- (b) agrees that the Use of Investigatory Powers Policy remained fit for purpose and requires no amendment.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations contained in the report.

ALTENS EAST RECYCLING AND RESOURCE FACILITY - FIRE INVESTIGATION REPORT - OPE/23/030

5. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Resources which provided information on the outcome of the Scottish Fire and Rescue (SFRS) report on the fire at Altens East Recycling and Resource Facility on 8 July 2022.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee -

- (a) notes the contents of the attached Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) fire investigation report; and
- (b) notes that as an organisation, we can conclude from the SFRS report, that the fire at Altens East did not occur as a result of a failure in our system of internal control.

In response to various questions from members, the Waste and Recycling Manager advised that (1) the facility was being rebuilt with a timeline of late 2024 or early 2025; (2) the CCTV footage was not conclusive on the cause of the fire however it was likely to be a battery or similar electronic device deposited in recycling; (3) the first call to SFRS was an automatic call; and (4) the video footage from the start of the fire had been and would continue to be used to educate people on the importance of disposing waste in the correct manner to prevent similar issues in the future.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that the Waste and Recycling Manager would circulate, by email, details of the number of waste fires across the UK to the Committee; and
- (ii) to request the Waste and Recycling Manager to identify further actions that could be taken to educate citizens on the disposal of vapes and other battery/electrical products and report to the most relevant Committee in due course; and

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- (iii) to otherwise approve the recommendations contained in the report.

EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORT - CHARITIES ACCOUNTS

6. The Committee had before it a report by KPMG, External Auditor which presented their draft annual external audit report and summarised their audit opinions and conclusions on issues arising from the audit of the in relation to the Council's 2021/22 Charitable Trusts Annual Accounts.

The Committee resolved:-

to note the content of the report.

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS FOR THOSE REGISTERED CHARITIES WHERE THE COUNCIL ARE THE SOLE TRUSTEE - RES/22/260

7. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Resources which provided an overview of the Council's 2021/22 audited Charitable Trusts Annual Accounts.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee -

- (a) approves the Council's audited Charitable Trusts Annual Accounts for the financial year 2021/22 as presented, subject to the final amendments being agreed with external auditors, following consultation with the Chief Executive and four political group leaders; and
- (b) approves Councillor Alex McLellan, as Convener of Finance & Resources Committee to sign the 2021/22 Charitable Trusts Annual Accounts.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations contained in the report.

TRANSPARENCY STATEMENT

At this juncture, Councillor Yuill advised that he had a connection in relation to the following item of business by virtue of him being a member of NHS Grampian Board. Having applied the objective test, he did not consider that he had an interest and would not be withdrawing from the meeting.

INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT - IA/23/001

8. 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.

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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.

In response to a question relating to clarification over Health & Social Care Partnership (H&SCP) and Integrated Joint Board (IJB) audits, the Chief Internal Auditor advised that audits for the IJB were strategic in relation to the Board and audits for the H&SCP aligned to services that the Council managed on behalf of the IJB.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations contained in the report.

OUT OF AUTHORITY PLACEMENTS - AC/2301

9. The Committee had before it a report by the Chief Internal Auditor which presented an audit in relation to Out of Authority Placements which had been undertaken to ensure the system for commencing and reviewing out of authority placements was adequate, effective and consistently applied.

The report recommended:-

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

In response to a question regarding the development of a Family Support Model, the Chief Officer – Integrated Children’s and Family Services advised that the Family Support Model looked at delivering early and preventative support to children and families through the establishment of four workstreams where they had identified test or change which were being presented to the Children’s Services Board and being incorporated into the revised Children’s Service Plan which would be reported to the Education and Children’s Services Committee on 21 March 2023.

In response to a question regarding the budget overspend and whether more focus was required on the actual children in placements, the Chief Officer – Integrated Children’s and Family Services advised that the number of Looked after Children had fallen over recent years and that there was close monitoring of each child in residential or day placements. He further advised that external agencies often dictated the outcome for children therefore there would always be a vulnerability on the budget.

In response to a question regarding the breakdown of the Looked after Children information, the Chief Officer – Integrated Children’s and Family Services advised that the data was contained in the performance reports that were discussed at the Education and Children’s Services Committee.

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The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note the responses to members questions; and
- (ii) to otherwise endorse the recommendations for improvement as agreed by the relevant function.

HERITAGE AND HISTORICAL ASSETS - AC/2305

10. The Committee had before it a report by the Chief Internal Auditor which presented an audit in relation to Heritage and Historical Assets which was undertaken to consider whether adequate control was exercised over heritage/historical assets' inventory management.

The report recommended:-

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

In response to a question regarding whether the Legislative Framework being imposed was causing undue stress to Council finances in order to process volunteers' right to work status, the Interim Chief Officer – Governance advised that in the legislation there was a different distinction between volunteer work, right to work in the UK, and volunteers who don't need it.

In response to a question regarding security arrangements and the findings highlighting a single point of failure in relation to some elements of security based system work, the Chief Internal Auditor advised that only one member of staff had access to the security logs and internal audit would recommend an additional member of staff to cover holidays or periods of sickness.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note the responses to members questions; and
- (ii) to otherwise endorse the recommendations for improvement as agreed by the function.

VALEDICTORY

11. At this point in the proceedings, the Convener advised that as of 22 February, she would be stepping down as the Convener of the Committee. She thanked members for their contributions over her time as Convener.

Councillors Nicoll and Yuill thanked Councillor Macdonald for her convenership of the Committee.

- **COUNCILLOR SANDRA MACDONALD, Convener**