

STANDARDS AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minute of Meeting of the Standards and Scrutiny Committee held in the Committee Room, Fourth Floor, Council Building, 2 High Street, Perth on Wednesday 25 October 2006 at 2.00pm.

Present: Councillors Barrett, Ellis, Jack, Lennie, Lloyd and Mair and Mr I Jackson, Mr C Mackie and Mr F Shewan (until Art. 681).

In Attendance: A Nairn, J McLuckie, G Taylor and M Kay (all Corporate Services); W Kirkpatrick, L Mason and M Cram (all Education & Children's Services); D Roberts (Executive Director - Housing & Community Care); J Valentine and I Sleith (both Environment Services).

Apology for Absence: Councillor Coburn.

Councillor Lloyd, Convener, Presiding.

VALEDICTORY

Prior to the commencement of business, the Convener made reference to the departure of J McLuckie, Governance and Scrutiny Officer and on behalf of the Committee thanked him for his assistance since his appointment.

ROLE AND REMIT OF STANDARDS & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Prior to the commencement of business, the Convener advised that he had extended the Committee's invitation to the Leader of the Administration to attend today's meeting, but he had suggested that it would be more appropriate to meet with the Members of the Committee at a convenient time to discuss the future role and remit of the Committee. Councillors Lennie and Jack expressed their disappointment that the Leader of the Council was not present.

677. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

678. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

(i) Standards and Scrutiny Committee – 6 September 2006

The Minute of Meeting of the Standards and Scrutiny Committee of 6 September 2006 (Arts. 570-577) was submitted, approved as a correct record and authorised for signature.

(ii) Audit Sub-Committee – 29 June 2006

The Minute of Meeting of the Audit Sub-Committee of 29 June 2006 was submitted and noted (**Appendix I**).

Resolved:

Audit Sub-Committee – Programme of Meetings

The next meeting of the Audit Sub-Committee scheduled to be held at 10.00am on 9 November 2006 be held on Wednesday 8 November 2006 at 2.30pm.

679. HMIE, CARE COMMISSION AND EDUCATION AUTHORITY REPORTS ON STANDARDS AND QUALITY IN SCHOOLS, PRE-SCHOOL CENTRES AND OTHER ESTABLISHMENTS

There was submitted a report by the Executive Director (Education and Children's Services) (06/737) advising the Committee of the key findings and progress made with the main points for action as set out in the four summary reports (Appendices 1-4 to Report 06/737) from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIE), the Care Commission and the Education Authority, relating to Alyth

Primary School; Letham Primary School, Perth; Cedar Park Nursery, Meigle; and Netherton Montessori Nursery School, Alyth.

Officers from Education and Children's Services were present to answer members' questions on the following, particularly in relation to the action being taken to address issues raised within the reports.

(a) Alyth Primary School

Resolved:

- (i) The findings of the HMle Inspection Report on the standards and quality in Alyth Primary School be noted.

(b) Letham Primary School, Perth

Resolved:

- (i) The findings of the HMle Inspection Report on the standards and quality in Letham Primary School be noted.

(c) Cedar Park Nursery, Meigle

Resolved:

The findings of the HMle/Care Commission Integrated Inspection Report on the standards and quality in Cedar Park Nursery, Meigle be noted.

(d) Netherton Montessori Nursery School, Alyth

Resolved:

The findings of the HMle/Care Commission Integrated Inspection Report on the standards and quality in Netherton Montessori Nursery School, Alyth be noted.

680. ATTAINMENT IN PERTH & KINROSS SCHOOLS 2006

There was submitted a report by the Executive Director (Education and Children's Services) (06/738) presenting an analysis of the performance of candidates presented by Perth and Kinross Schools in the 2006 diets of Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) examinations and pupil attainment in 5 – 14.

Resolved:

- (i) The contents of Report 06/738 be noted.
- (ii) The Executive Director (Education and Children's Services) be instructed to (1) ensure that schools take forward the agreed outcomes of the Learning and Achievement visits through their School Improvement Plans and (2) commend staff and pupils for their efforts in achieving these results.

I JACKSON, C MACKIE, F SHEWAN, W KIRKPATRICK, L MASON AND M CRAM ALL LEFT THE MEETING AT THIS POINT.

681. SCOTTISH PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN REPORTS

There was submitted a report by the Depute Director (Corporate Services) (06/739) presenting two recent reports into complaints against Perth and Kinross Council from the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

The Head of Development Standards was present to answer members' questions on Appendix 1 to Report 06/739 and on the action being taken to address issues raised particularly in relation to Tree Preservation Orders and Enforcement.

The Executive Director (Housing & Community Care) was present to answer members' questions on Appendix 2 to Report 06/739, particularly in relation to response times for complex complaints and where other agencies are involved.

The Governance and Scrutiny Officer advised that a review was being carried out on the first year of operation of the complaints procedure to establish if response times were realistic and a report would be submitted thereon to a future meeting of this Committee.

Resolved:

- (i) The investigation reports as detailed in Report 06/739 be noted.
- (ii) The Ombudsman's recommendations accepted by Council Officers be noted and appropriate action be taken thereon in particular the Chief Executive write to the complainer referred to in Appendix 1 to Report 06/739 apologising for the Council's handling of the application concerned.

J VALENTINE LEFT THE MEETING AT THIS POINT.

682. BFI INSPECTION ACTION PLAN – PROGRESS REPORT (ART. 931/05)

There was submitted a report by the Executive Director (Housing & Community Care) (06/740) outlining the progress on the action plan developed to address the findings of the Benefit Fraud Inspectorate (BFI) of the Department for Work and Pensions report agreed by the Standards and Scrutiny Committee on 7 December 2005.

Resolved:

- (i) The progress on implementing the action plan for improving the speed and accuracy of processing benefits claims since the BFI Inspection in 2005 be approved.
- (ii) The Executive Director (Housing & Community Care) be instructed to report further progress after 31 March 2007.