

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL  
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
15 JUNE 2011

## SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minute of Meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held in the Committee Room, Fourth Floor, Council Building, 2 High Street, Perth on Wednesday 15 June 2011 at 2.00pm.

Present: Councillors K Baird, I Campbell, T Gray (substituting for Councillor W Lumsden), G Hayton (substituting for Councillor A Gaunt), D Scott, B Vaughan and A Wylie.

In Attendance: B Malone, Chief Executive, G Taylor, T Yule, F Mackay, D Henderson, L Dott and M Kay (all Chief Executive's Service); W Atkinson, Depute Director (Education and Children's Services), S Devlin and J Gilchrist (Education and Children's Services); L Cameron (Housing and Community Care); and B Renton (The Environment Service).

Also Attending: M Richardson, Henderson Loggie.

Apologies for Absence: Councillors W Lumsden and A Gaunt, Mr I Jackson and Mr D Stewart.

Councillor K Baird, Convener, Presiding

### 370. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

### 371. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

#### (i) Scrutiny Committee

The Minute of Meeting of the Scrutiny Committee of 20 April 2011 was submitted, approved as a correct record and authorised for signature.

Note: (Art 208(ii)) Summary Report on HMle and Care Commission Inspections.

At the invitation of the Convener, Councillor Vaughan reported that she had met with the Heads of Education to discuss the arrangements for reporting feedback to members and had suggested that, where appropriate, a follow-up report be submitted to the Lifelong Learning Executive Sub-Committee after a period of one year. The Heads of Service reported also that they were in discussion with the Convener and Vice Conveners of the Lifelong Learning Committee on how best to take forward any measures which may be necessary to improve the scrutiny process of the inspection reports.

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**(ii) Audit Sub-Committee**

The Minute of Meeting of the Audit Sub-Committee of 9 March 2011 was submitted and noted. (*Appendix I*)

**372. JOINT BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AND IMPROVEMENT PLANS AND ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORTS**

**(i) Chief Executive's Service**

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive (11/314) presenting the Chief Executive's Service Joint Business Management and Improvement Plan and Annual Performance Report for the period 2011 to 2014, which had been approved by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting earlier in the day.

In response to members' questions, B Malone, Chief Executive and W Atkinson, Depute Director, Education and Children's Services, referred to (1) the participation rates and results of the Employee Survey, the impact of the extent of change on staff and the action being taken on leadership and improvement across the Council to increase participation rates and address issues raised; and (2) the emphasis being placed on completion of the Employee Review and Development process, whilst noting the effect of staff turnover and sickness absence on completion levels and action being taken to streamline the process.

G Taylor, Head of Democratic Services, reported that the inspection reports for 2010 for all registration offices in Perth and Kinross had recently been received from the Registrar General. Whilst the figures showed an improvement in performance across the service as a whole, and this would be reported formally to the next meeting of the Committee in September 2011, the figures also confirmed the need for the Council to consider options for the future provision of registration services in Coupar Angus and Milnathort (Scrutiny Committee - 15 September 2010 (Art 526/10)), which would be reported to the meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in September 2011.

**Resolved:**

- (i) The Chief Executive's Service Joint Business Management and Improvement Plan and Annual Performance Report for the period 2011 to 2014, as detailed in the Appendix to Report 11/314, be accepted.
- (ii) The Chief Executive give consideration to the best way to provide a more in depth report to members on the various methods employed to obtain employee feedback.

**(ii) Education and Children's Services**

There was submitted a report by the Executive Director (Education and Children's Services) (11/251) presenting the Education and Children's Services Joint Business Management and Improvement Plan and

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Annual Performance Report for the period 2011 to 2014, which had been approved by the Lifelong Learning Committee at its meeting on 1 June 2011.

In response to members' questions, W Atkinson referred to (1) a review being undertaken of the Community Planning Partnership governance structure, particularly in relation to the remit of the Lifelong Learning Partnership, and arrangements for the next meeting; (2) the way in which user satisfaction at community campuses was being measured; and (3) the terminology used in the report matching that in the Curriculum for Excellence.

**Resolved:**

The Education and Children's Services Joint Business Management and Improvement Plan and Annual Performance Report for the period 2011 to 2014, as detailed in the Appendix to Report 11/251, be accepted.

**(iii) The Environment Service**

There was submitted a report by the Executive Director (Environment) (11/287) presenting The Environment Service's Joint Business Management and Improvement Plan and Annual Performance Report for the period 2011 to 2014, which had been approved by the Environment Committee, the Community Safety Committee and the Enterprise and Infrastructure Committee, at their meetings on 8 June 2011.

In response to questions from Councillor I Campbell in relation to the Council's carbon reduction commitment, the potential cost to the Council of carbon trading on the open market over the next five years and the strategy to be adopted in this regard to minimise costs, B Renton reported that the emphasis would be on efforts to reduce carbon emissions rather than attempting to estimate the potential cost in five years which could be only speculative. B Malone confirmed that the priority was to reduce energy and carbon emissions in order to mitigate costs. B Renton and T Yule further explained that the focus of impact assessments was to identify and manage any impact in the implementation of a proposal.

It was noted that, as Audit Scotland were no longer publishing a number of Performance Indicators previously available, it was not possible to compare performance against other Councils.

**Resolved:**

The Environment Service's Joint Business Management and Improvement Plan and Annual Performance Report for the period 2011 to 2014, as detailed in the Appendix to Report 11/287, be accepted.

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**(iv) Housing and Community Care**

There was submitted a report by the Executive Director (Housing and Community Care) (11/245) presenting Housing and Community Care's Joint Business Management and Improvement Plan and Annual Performance Report for the period 2011 to 2014, which had been approved by the Housing and Health Committee at its meeting on 1 June 2011 and by the Community Safety Committee on 8 June 2011.

Members commented on (1) the need to standardise presentation of the Joint Business Management and Improvement Plans; (2) the high number of applicants on the combined housing waiting list; and (3) the improvement made in meeting the target for reduction of rent arrears.

**Resolved:**

- (i) Housing and Community Care's Joint Business Management and Improvement Plan and Annual Performance Report for the period 2011 to 2014, as detailed in the Appendix to Report 11/245, be accepted.
- (ii) The Head of Housing and Strategic Commissioning provide the Committee with a breakdown of rent arrears by amount and time outstanding.

**373. AUDIT SCOTLAND 'OVERVIEW OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN SCOTLAND 2010' REPORT**

There was submitted a report by the Head of Business Transformation and Improvement (11/315) providing a summary of the Overview of Local Government in Scotland 2010 report which had been published by Audit Scotland in February 2011, and which had been noted by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting earlier that day.

M Richardson, Henderson Loggie, External Auditors, explained that Audit Scotland prepared the high level overview report based on External Auditors' Annual Reports and referred to the change of focus away from naming individual councils in the report and gathering numerous performance indicators to ensuring Councils are performing and improving delivery of outcomes; she emphasised the importance of the Council having accurate information on which to base future decisions.

In considering the questions for elected members set out in Audit Scotland's report and in Paragraph 4.2 of Report 11/315, the Convener stressed the importance of training for elected members to carry out their duties effectively and of the quality of information presented to them; in response, the Chief Executive referred to (1) the "Getting it Right First Time" document which set out the type of information required which would be relevant in preparing reports to properly inform decision-making and (2) proposals for related training for officers and members. G Taylor advised that the current template for preparing reports to committee would also be reviewed.

In relation to actions for Councils, T Yule (1) reported on the action taken to consider the report against the Corporate Improvement Plan, the Best Value Audit

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process and How Good is Our Council; (2) advised that these documents would be reviewed to ensure continuous improvement, and (3) referred to proposals to involve more elected members by including this topic in induction training and providing a resource toolkit on the Councillors' intranet.

**Resolved:**

- (i) The findings of the Overview of Local Government in Scotland 2010 report be noted.
- (ii) The actions being taken within Perth and Kinross Council be noted.

**374. COUNCIL COMPLAINTS REPORT FOR OCTOBER 2010 - MARCH 2011**

There was submitted a report by the Head of Legal Services (11/324) outlining the performance of the Council's complaints procedure for the period October 2010 to March 2011.

In response to members' questions on the report, D Henderson referred to the effect small numbers had on percentages reported in relation to unmet timescales; and it was noted that in future numbers would be used to report on these rather than percentages and the Chief Executive reported on (1) the increase in complainants pursuing redress; (2) improved responses to complaints; (3) the complexity and time consuming nature of some complaints which affected timescales; (4) how complainants could be helped to make their complaint in a more coherent manner and (5) the requirement that complaints be dealt with through the formal Council complaints procedure before the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman will consider a complaint.

**Resolved:**

The contents of Report 11/324 be noted.

B MALONE LEFT THE MEETING AT THIS POINT

**375. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REVIEW OF LEARNING FROM COMPLAINTS AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND FEEDBACK**

There was submitted a report by the Head of Business Transformation and Improvement (11/325) outlining the scope for a review to be undertaken by the Scrutiny Committee, which will focus on the approach to improving service delivery through use of the information gained from complaints and customer satisfaction and feedback.

**Resolved:**

- (i) Report 11/325, including the scope and terms of reference for the third review by the Committee, as outlined in Appendix 1 to Report 11/325, be approved.
- (ii) The Head of Business Transformation and Improvement be instructed to submit a final report including the findings from the review to the Scrutiny Committee on 8 February 2012 and to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on 28 March 2012.

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**376. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND AUDIT SUB-COMMITTEE FORWARD PLANNER 2011/2012**

There was submitted a report by the Head of Business Transformation and Improvement (11/326) presenting the Perth and Kinross Council Scrutiny and Audit Sub-Committee Forward Planner for 2011/2012.

**Resolved:**

- (i) The Scrutiny Committee and Audit Sub-Committee Forward Planner for May 2011-May 2012 as set out in Appendix 1 to report 11/326 be approved, subject to minor amendment.
- (ii) The Scrutiny and Governance forward planner for all Committees and Sub-Committees as contained in Appendix 2 to Report 11/326, be noted.
- (iii) It was noted that following the recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee Review of Grounds Maintenance, a report on action taken in relation to the verge cutting contract would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

W ATKINSON, F MACKAY, L DOTT, S DEVLIN, J GILCHRIST AND B RENTON LEFT THE MEETING AT THIS POINT

**THE CONVENER RULED THAT IN HER OPINION THE FOLLOWING ITEM SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY IN TERMS OF SECTION 50(B)(4)(B) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (SCOTLAND) ACT 1973.**

**IT WAS AGREED THAT THE PUBLIC AND PRESS BE EXCLUDED DURING CONSIDERATION OF THE FOLLOWING ITEM IN ORDER TO AVOID THE DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION WHICH WAS EXEMPT IN TERMS OF SCHEDULE 7A TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (SCOTLAND) ACT 1973**

**377. SOCIAL WORK COMPLAINTS REVIEW COMMITTEE**

There was submitted the Minute of Meeting of the Social Work Complaints Review Committee of 19 April 2011.

L Cameron, Housing and Community Care, was present to answer members' questions on the Minute and confirmed that it had not been possible to reach agreement on the level of fees to be paid and that arbitration would be sought.

**Resolved:**

The Minute of the Social Work Complaints Review Committee of 19 April 2011 be approved.

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