

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minute of Meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held in the Committee Room, Fourth Floor, Council Building, 2 High Street, Perth on Wednesday 2 December 2009 at 2.00pm.

Present: Councillors K Baird, J Law, I Campbell, G Hayton (substituting for Councillor A Gaunt), E Maclachlan (substituting for Councillor W Lumsden), D Scott and B Vaughan and Mr D Stewart.

In Attendance: B Malone, (Chief Executive); D Burke, Executive Director (Housing and Community Care); G Taylor, F Mackay, L Dott, and L Brown (all Chief Executive's); E Crichton and J Symon (both Corporate Services); B Atkinson, M Walker, C Webb (all up to and including Art. 618) and J Gilchrist (all Education and Children's Services); J Dean (Housing and Community Care); B Renton (The Environment Service)

Apologies for Absence: Councillor A Gaunt and Councillor W Lumsden

Councillor Baird, Convener, Presiding.

615. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

616. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

(i) Scrutiny Committee

The Minute of Meeting of the Scrutiny Committee of 16 September 2009 (Arts. 476 – 480) was submitted, approved as a correct record and authorised for signature.

(ii) Audit Sub-Committee of 19 August 2009

The Minute of Meeting of the Audit Sub-Committee of 19 August 2009 was submitted and noted. (*Appendix I*)

617. ATTAINMENT IN PERTH AND KINROSS SCHOOLS 2009

There was submitted a revised report by the Executive Director (Education and Children's Services) (09/575) (1) presenting an analysis of pupil attainment in primary schools and at S2 in secondary schools and (2) highlighting the performance of candidates presented by Perth and Kinross schools in Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) 2009 diets examinations.

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The Depute Director and Heads of Service from Education and Children's Services were present and answered a number of questions from members on attainment levels in schools; the difficulties in the use of comparators; self-evaluations undertaken by schools, and Service proposals for raising attainment levels in future years.

Resolved:

- (i) The contents of Report 09/575 be noted.
- (ii) It be noted that the report on the Attainment in Perth and Kinross Schools 2009 had been submitted to and approved by the Lifelong Learning Committee on 28 October 2009.
- (iii) The Executive Director (Education and Children's Services) be requested to submit reports on trends emerging from HMIE reports to the Scrutiny Committee on an annual basis.

618. SIX MONTHLY BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN PERFORMANCE EXCEPTION REPORTS

(i) Education and Children's Services

There was submitted a report by the Executive Director (Education and Children's Services) (08/576) reviewing the performance of Education and Children's Services against the Business Management and Improvement Plan for the period 1 April 2009 to 30 September 2008.

The Depute Director and Heads of Service from Education and Children's Services were present and answered a number of questions from members on visitor numbers to libraries and computer usage, children on the child protection register; sickness absence levels in teaching staff (in particular the levels for academic versus calendar years) and third and four tier officer participation in corporate leadership training.

Resolved:

- (i) The Education and Children's Services Six Monthly summary of performance against the Business Management and Improvement Plan for the period 1 April 2009 to 30 September 2009, as detailed in the Appendix to Report 09/576, be noted.
- (ii) It be noted that the Education and Children's Services Six Monthly Performance Report had been submitted to and approved by the Lifelong Learning Committee on 28 October 2009.

The Convener noted that this was the last meeting of the Scrutiny Committee to be attended by Chris Webb, Head of Education Services, prior to his taking up a position with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education. On behalf of the Committee the Convener thanked him for his contribution to the work of the Education Service and the Committee and wished him well for the future.

B ATKINSON, M WALKER AND C WEBB LEFT THE MEETING AT THIS POINT.

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(ii) Chief Executive's Service

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive (08/566) reviewing the performance of the Chief Executive's Service against the Business Management and Improvement Plan for the period 1 April 2009 to 30 September 2008.

The Chief Executive advised that the results of the Employee Survey would be submitted to the next meeting of the Council on 16 December 2009 and that reports on Modernising the Customer Interface and Corporate Publications would be submitted to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in 2010.

Resolved:

The Chief Executive's Service Six Monthly summary of performance against the Business Management and Improvement Plan for the period 1 April 2009 to 30 September 2009, as detailed in the Appendix to Report 09/566, be noted.

(iii) Corporate Services

There was submitted a joint report by the Head of Finance and the Head of Legal Services (08/567) reviewing the performance of Corporate Services against the Business Management and Improvement Plan for the period 1 April 2009 to 30 September 2008.

The Head of Finance was present and answered questions from members on carbon emissions, in particular, in relation to benchmarking biomass boilers against older, less efficient boilers; and proposals to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of internal audit procedures.

Resolved:

The Corporate Services Six Monthly summary of performance against the Business Management and Improvement Plan for the period 1 April 2009 to 30 September 2009, as detailed in the Appendix to Report 09/567, be noted.

(iv) The Environment Service

There was submitted a report by the Executive Director (Environment) (08/493) reviewing the performance of The Environment Service against the Business Management and Improvement Plan for the period 1 April 2009 to 30 September 2008.

The Convener made reference to the work carried out by staff in the Customer Service Centre and congratulated them on the excellent service provided. The inclusion in the report of a number of economic targets which were outwith the control of the Council was questioned and the valuable

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contribution of the Bloom Committees was noted and their potential to have a positive impact on tourism figures.

Resolved:

- (i) The Environment Service Six Monthly summary of performance against the Business Management and Improvement Plan for the period 1 April 2009 to 30 September 2009, as detailed in the Appendix to Report 09/493, be noted.
- (ii) It be noted that The Environment Service Six Monthly Performance Report had been submitted to and approved by the Environment Committee and the Enterprise and Infrastructure Committee on 4 November 2009 and the Community Safety Committee on 25 November 2009.
- (iii) The Head of Economic Development be requested to undertake an economic impact study on Bloom Committees.

(v) Housing and Community Care

There was submitted a report by the Executive Director (Housing and Community Care) (08/493(a)) reviewing the performance of Housing and Community Care against the Business Management and Improvement Plan for the period 1 April 2009 to 30 September 2008.

The Executive Director (Housing and Community Care) and Head of Community Care were present and answered questions from members on the increase in the cases of repeat presentations by the homeless; changes to the Meals Service and the effects of those changes in terms of personal contact with the users of the service.

Resolved:

- (i) The Housing and Community Care Six Monthly summary of performance against the Business Management and Improvement Plan for the period 1 April 2009 to 30 September 2009, as detailed in the Appendix to Report 09/493(a), be noted.
- (ii) It be noted that the Housing and Community Care Six Monthly Performance Report had been submitted to and approved by the Housing and Health Committee on 28 October 2009 and the Community Safety Committee on 25 November 2009.
- (iii) The Executive Director (Housing and Community Care) be requested to submit a report to a future meeting of the Scrutiny Committee on the Council's Service Level Agreement with the WRVS.

619. SIX MONTHLY SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive (09/562) reviewing the performance of the Perth and Kinross Community Planning Partnership against the Single Outcome Agreement 2009-2011 for the period 1 April 2009 to 30 September 2009. The Committee noted the number of teachers who had received training on

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the ThinkuKnow programme was 300 and not 700 as detailed in the appendix to the report.

Resolved:

The Six Monthly Single Outcome Agreement Performance Report, as detailed in Report 09/562, be noted.

620. PUBLIC RIGHT TO POLICY REVIEW – REQUEST FROM MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC FOR CONSIDERATION

The Head of Democratic Services reported that in terms of Paragraph 10.2.5.2 of the Council's Scheme of Administration it was remitted to the Scrutiny Committee to consider and report on suggestions received from the public for policy review and/or substantive policy changes. In accordance with that paragraph an enquiry had been received from a member of the public on: (1) what actions, initiatives, and projects the Council and its partners had undertaken to address homophobic crime and engage with LGBT communities, and (2) how it had fulfilled its designation as a Stonewall Diversity Champion.

Resolved:

- (i) It be remitted to the Chief Executive write to the individual advising of the various equality and diversity policies, initiatives and projects the Council has in place.
- (ii) The Head of Democratic Services be requested to submit a report to a future meeting of the Council on the Public Right to Policy Review.

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