

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
23 June 2010

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minute of Meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held in the Committee Room, Fourth Floor, Council Building, 2 High Street, Perth on Wednesday 23 June 2010 at 2.00pm.

Present: Councillors I Campbell, A Gaunt, M Roberts (substituting for Councillor Baird) D Scott, A Wylie (substituting for Councillor Lumsden) and B Vaughan.

In Attendance: G Taylor, T Yule, D Henderson, F Mackay, L Dott and M Kay (all Chief Executive's), M Walker, J Gilchrist and P Kaye (all Education and Children's Services), B Renton (The Environment Service), and L Cameron (Housing and Community Care).

Apologies for Absence: Councillors K Baird and W Lumsden, Mr I Jackson and Mr D Stewart.

359. APPOINTMENT OF CONVENER

In the absence of the Convener and pending the appointment of a Vice Convener,

Motion (Councillors A Wylie and D Scott)

Councillor Gaunt be appointed to chair the meeting.

Amendment (Councillors M Roberts and I Campbell)

Councillor B Vaughan be appointed to chair the meeting.

Amendment – 3 votes

Motion - 3 votes

In terms of Standing Order 45, on a cut of the cards, Councillor B Vaughan was appointed to chair the meeting.

Councillor Vaughan took the Chair.

Prior to commencement of business, Councillor Vaughan, on behalf of the Committee, sent her condolences to Councillor Baird on her family bereavement.

360. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

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361. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

(i) Scrutiny Committee

The Minute of Meeting of the Scrutiny Committee of 21 April 2010 (Arts. 215 – 221) was submitted, approved as a correct record and authorised for signature.

(ii) Audit Sub-Committee of 3 March 2010

The Minute of Meeting of the Audit Sub-Committee of 3 March 2010 was submitted and noted. (*Appendix I*)

362. JOINT BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AND IMPROVEMENT PLANS FOR 2010-2013 AND ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORTS 2009-2010

(i) Chief Executive's Service

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive (10/342) presenting the Joint Business Management and Improvement Plan and Annual Performance Report for the Chief Executive's Service for 2010, which had been approved by Perth and Kinross Council at its meeting on 11 May 2010.

In response to members' questions, T Yule and G Taylor, referred to (1) the opportunity afforded to members to be involved in the development of Services' Business Management and Improvement Plans; (2) the timing of reports to Committee to tie in with the performance management cycle; (3) specific areas of performance in relation to results of the employee survey and response rates and staff engagement actions being taken to address the issues raised and (4) the action taken to refresh the Viewfinder Panel.

Resolved:

The Chief Executive's Service Joint Business Management and Improvement Plan and Annual Performance Report for 2010, as detailed in the Appendix to Report 10/342, be accepted.

(ii) Education and Children's Services

There was submitted a report by the Executive Director (Education and Children's Services) (10/343) presenting the Joint Business Management and Improvement Plan and Annual Performance Report for Education and Children's Services for 2010-2013, which had been approved by Perth and Kinross Council at its meeting on 11 May 2010 and the Lifelong Learning Committee at its meeting on 19 May 2010.

In response to members' questions M Walker and J Gilchrist referred to (1) the use being made and the benefits of information sourced from the School Management Information System (SEEMIS) which provided up-to-date data covering all schools, in tracking performance;

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comparators; assessing achievements; identifying where interventions are appropriate; identifying trends; assessing if predictions and actions taken are correct; identifying the appropriate support for Looked After young people; benchmarking with other Councils and its application to inform the Head of Education's meetings with Head Teachers and to develop a more targeted management programme for Principal Teachers. (2) the need for trends identified in HMle reports being reported to the Scrutiny Committee (3) the basis of the performance indicators in relation to Sport and Active Recreation and the contribution this made to the community's health and wellbeing.

Resolved:

The Education and Children's Services Joint Business Management and Improvement Plan and Annual Performance Report for 2010-2013, as detailed in the Appendix to Report 10/343 be accepted.

(iii) The Environment Service

There was submitted a report by the Executive Director (Environment) (10/344) presenting the Joint Business Management and Improvement Plan and Annual Performance Report for the Environment Service for 2010 which had been approved by Perth and Kinross Council at its meeting on 11 May 2010.

G Taylor responded to members' questions in relation to TACTRAN and TAYplan and noted that the TAYplan Main Issues Report would be considered by Perth and Kinross Council at its meeting on 30 June 2010.

B Renton responded to members' questions in relation to (1) decisions to be taken during the budget process on prioritising a number of key improvements, possibly by directing resources from other areas of service, and confirmed that any significant changes being reported to the appropriate Committee, (2) an explanation of the percentage of public building with disabled access, (3) energy and water conservation in relation to sustainability and the benefit gained in sharing premises, and undertook to provide information to Councillor Campbell on the ratio of spend to return on economic development activity and to ascertain if the Government's carbon trading scheme is to continue.

Resolved:

The Environment Service Joint Business Management and Improvement Plan and Annual Performance Report for 2010, as detailed in the Appendix to Report 10/344, be accepted.

(iv) Housing and Community Care

There was submitted a report by the Executive Director (Housing and Community Care) (10/345) presenting the Joint Business Management and Improvement Plan and Annual Performance Report for Housing

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and Community Care for 2010, which had been approved by Perth and Kinross Council at its meeting on 11 May 2010.

In response to members' questions, L Cameron referred to (1) the range of new build housing being provided; (2) the overarching objective of increasing the supply and improving housing in the economic downturn; (3) number of repairs; (4) the use of the Housing Revenue Account; (5) the effect of the introduction of the new Equality legislation and (6) government percentage targets for over 65 home care and intensive care needs and advised that officers would be assessing the impact on the Housing Service and its users of changes announced in the recent Budget in relation to Housing Benefit.

Resolved:

The Housing and Community Care Joint Business Management and Improvement Plan and Annual Performance Report for 2010, as detailed in the Appendix to Report 10/345, be accepted.

363. EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF THE EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY SERVICE

There was submitted a report by the Executive Director (Education and Children's Services) (10/346) providing details of the inspection carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIe) in November 2009 of the Educational Psychology Service.

In response to members' questions, P Kaye referred to (1) the need to streamline policies and procedures; (2) actions being taken to raise awareness of the education psychology service in primary schools and (3) the benefits of the Bounceback Resilience Project and Nurture Groups.

Resolved:

- (i) The HMIe summary evaluation of the Educational Psychology Service as contained in Appendix 1 of Report 10/346 be accepted.
- (ii) The Educational Psychology Team be congratulated on their excellent report.

P KAYE LEFT THE MEETING AT THIS POINT

364. AUDIT SCOTLAND – 'OVERVIEW OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN SCOTLAND 2009' REPORT

There was submitted a report by the Head of Business Transformation and Improvement (10/347) providing a summary of the Overview of Local Government in Scotland 2009 published by Audit Scotland in February 2010.

Resolved:

- (i) The findings of the Overview of Local Government in Scotland 2009 be noted.
- (ii) A copy of the seventeen key questions as detailed in Appendix 2 of Report 10/347 be circulated to all elected members at the briefing on the Transformation Strategy – Securing the Future – Towards 2015 and Beyond to be held on 29 June 2010.

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365. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION PERFORMANCE REPORT 2009

There was submitted a report by the Head of Legal Services (10/348) providing information on the continuing good performance of the Council in respect of Freedom of Information for 2009.

D Henderson was present to answer members' questions on the Report in relation to obligations in meeting timescales for response and sanctions which can be imposed for non compliance. It was recognised that the level of compliance achieved came at a cost and concern was expressed at the limitations of the charging framework for a Freedom of Information request, which did not permit a recharge of costs incurred unless the cost of provision of information was in excess of £500, in which case a ten percent charge could be applied.

Resolved:

- (i) The contents of Report 10/348 be noted.
- (ii) The Freedom of Information Team be congratulated on the continuing good performance in compliance.
- (iii) The Committee's concerns on the limited provision for recharge of costs resulting from Freedom of Information requests be recorded.

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