

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
9 February 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 9 February 2011 at 2.00pm.

Present: Councillors K Baird, W Lumsden, P Barrett (substituting for Councillor A Gaunt), M Roberts (substituting for Councillor I Campbell), B Vaughan, A Wylie and Mr I Jackson.

In Attendance: M Walker, Depute Director (Education and Children's Services); J Gilchrist (Education and Children's Services); G Taylor, T Yule, C Flynn, F Mackay and M Kay (all Chief Executive's Service); C Mailer and J Mayglothling (both Housing and Community Care); B Renton and L A Cassidy (both the Environment Service).

Apologies for Absence: Councillors I Campbell, A Gaunt, D Scott, Mr I Jackson and Mr D Stewart.

Councillor Baird, Convener, Presiding

68. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

69. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

(i) Scrutiny Committee

The Minute of Meeting of the Scrutiny Committee of 9 December 2010 (Arts 661 – 671/10) was submitted, approved as a correct record and authorised for signature.

(ii) Audit Sub-Committee

The Minute of Meeting of the Audit Sub-Committee of 22 September 2010 was submitted and noted. (*Appendix I*)

(iii) Audit Sub-Committee

The Minute of Meeting of the Audit Sub-Committee of 17 November 2010 was submitted and noted. (*Appendix II*)

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
9 February 2011

70. STANDARDS AND QUALITY REPORT 2009-10

There was submitted a report by the Executive Director (Education and Children's Services) (11/05) reflecting on the activities of Education and Children's Services over 2009/10 and presenting an overview of the Services' key strengths and areas for improvement. Report 11/05 had been accepted by the Lifelong Learning Committee at its meeting on 12 January 2011 (Art. 10 refers).

M Walker, Depute Director (Education and Children's Services) and J Gilchrist, Team Leader – Performance, Education and Children's Services, were present to answer members' questions on the report in relation to (1) attainment figures in mathematics; (2) intervention actions taken to address any issues identified; (3) school leaver destinations and local employment opportunities; (4) the changes to alternative forms of measuring achievement and the relative currency placed on these by employers; (5) the level of recidivism affecting the number of exclusions from schools; (6) the benefit of early intervention to encourage attendance; (7) numbers applying but unsuccessful for the Business Community Support Group programmes and the criteria for selection; (8) actions being taken to address issues raised through HMIE Inspection Reports and the need to ensure standards of performance are maintained; (9) the effectiveness of HMIE reports being considered by the Lifelong Learning Executive Sub-Committee and the appropriateness of that arena for discussion on performance and improvement and (10) the method of calculating the participation levels in sport, and also measuring learning taking place, the impact on participation levels of the opportunities provided by the new Community Campuses, the extent of their catchment areas, the development of appropriate marketing to maximise the catchment area and the benefit of these activities to the quality of life across the whole community.

Resolved:

The Education and Children's Services Standards and Quality Report 2009-10, as detailed in the Appendix to Report 11/05, be accepted.

M WALKER AND J GILCHRIST LEFT THE MEETING AT THIS POINT

COUNCILLOR BARRETT WITHDREW FROM THE MEETING FOR ARTICLES 69 AND 70 AND TOOK NO PART IN THE DISCUSSION THEREOF.

71. RE-INSPECTION OF THE HOMELESS SERVICE BY THE SCOTTISH HOUSING REGULATOR (Art. 291/10)

There was submitted a report by the Executive Director (Housing and Community Care) (11/35) advising of (1) the key findings of the Scottish Housing Regulator's re-inspection of the Homeless Service in June 2010; and (2) highlighting the key strengths and main points for action. Report 11/35 had been agreed by the Housing and Health Committee at its meeting on 2 February 2011 (Art. 52 refers).

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
9 February 2011

C Mailer, Allocations and Homeless Manager, Housing and Community Care, was present to answer members' questions on the report in relation to lessons learned during the improvement process in relation to customer engagement, review of training, the use of self-evaluation tools such as How Good is our Homeless Service and the review of the monitoring and inspection framework, team planning, and ethos of the service, and as a result levels of service delivery were more customer focussed, T Yule, Head of Business and Improvement, Chief Executive's Service answered members questions in relation to implementation of the improvement agenda across the Council.

Resolved:

- (i) The contents of Report 11/35 and the grade B awarded by the Scottish Housing Regulator be noted.
- (ii) The significant improvements in the delivery of the homeless services be welcomed.

72. HOUSING AND COMMUNITY CARE COMPLAINTS REPORT

There was submitted a report by the Executive Director (Housing and Community Care) (11/37) outlining (1) complaints received between April 2009 and March 2010 across Housing and Community Care; (2) information on the number of informal complaints received; (3) examples of feedback from customer satisfaction surveys; and (4) actions required to improve services based on feedback from customers of the service. Report 11/37 had been agreed by the Housing and Health Committee at its meeting on 2 February 2011 (Art. 54 refers)

J Mayglothling, Team Leader – Customer Liaison, Housing and Community Care, was present to answer members' questions on the report in relation to (1) the emphasis on addressing complaints at an early stage; (2) reasons for complaints; (3) action taken on repeat complaints; (4) training provided to staff on customer care; and (5) the sample size of the tenant satisfaction survey on the kitchen renewal project.

Resolved:

The contents of the report and the impact of feedback from complaints on improving services be noted.

J MAYGLOTHLING LEFT THE MEETING AT THIS POINT

COUNCILLOR BARRETT REJOINED THE MEETING AT THIS POINT.

73. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REVIEW OF GROUNDS MAINTENANCE – UPDATE (Art. 478/09)

The Committee heard a presentation from Lesley-Ann Cassidy, Principal Parks Officer, The Environment Service, on the progress being made in addressing the findings of the Scrutiny Committee Review of Grounds Maintenance carried out in 2009 and also the actions arising from the Kaizen Blitz Improvement Session, including (1) movement towards consolidation of grounds maintenance budgets and

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
9 February 2011

commissioning of works for the maintenance of sites; (2) identification of ownership of sites maintained; (3) assessment of opportunities for sponsorship; (4) arrangements for verge cutting; (5) technical difficulties in maintenance of steep slopes; (6) action being taken on installation of new headstones to improve future stabilisation; (7) continuing community engagement; and (8) improvements to website information which had led to a reduction in enquiries.

She advised that benchmarking had identified the scale of grounds maintenance activity in Perth and Kinross and answered members' questions in relation to identification of hierarchy of sites; action which had led to improvements in sickness absence levels; maintenance of housing land; reasons for maintaining land not in Council ownership and the usefulness of the Committee's involvement in carrying out the review.

74. SPECIAL MEETING OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Resolved:

A Special Meeting of the Scrutiny Committee be held on Wednesday 23 February 2011 at 11.00am.

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