

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
1 April 2009

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minute of Meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held in the Committee Room, Fourth Floor, Council Building, 2 High Street, Perth on Wednesday 1 April 2009 at 2.00pm.

Present: Councillors K Baird, J Law, I Campbell, A Gaunt, W Lumsden, D Scott and B Vaughan and Mr D Stewart.

In Attendance: G Stevenson, Executive Director (Corporate Services); G Taylor, C Carlin, B Renton, R Goldsmith and M Kay (all Chief Executive's); M Walker, B Atkinson, H Jack and W Young (all Education and Children's Services); J Walker, E Scott and L Ann Cassidy (the Environment Service); H Turley, L Cameron and C Brandon (all Housing and Community Care).

Apology for Absence: Mr I Jackson

Councillor Baird, Convener, Presiding.

180. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

181. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

(i) Scrutiny Committee

The Minute of Meeting of the Scrutiny Committee of 4 February 2008 (Arts. 81 – 95) was submitted, approved as a correct record and authorised for signature.

(ii) Audit Sub-Committee of 21 January 2009

The Minute of Meeting of the Audit Sub-Committee of 21 January 2009 was submitted and noted. (*Appendix I*)

182. STATUTORY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2007/08 – SUMMARY OF AUDIT SCOTLAND'S COMPARISON OF SCOTTISH COUNCILS

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive (09/182) (1) summarising Perth and Kinross Council's statutory performance indicator (SPI) results for 2007/2008 in comparison with other Scottish local authorities; (2) setting out how Audit Scotland measure performance; and (3) detailing where the Council's performance had improved; areas where improvement was needed and actions required to ensure improvement.

B Renton, Chief Executive's Service, further reported that the change in approach to SPI's set out in the Commission's 2008 Directive, which took account of the Concordat between COSLA and the Scottish Government and the performance

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reporting arrangements of the Single Outcome Agreement, would alter internal performance reporting arrangements.

Officers from relevant Services were present to answer members' questions on the report.

Resolved:

- (i) The results of the Perth and Kinross Council Statutory Performance Indicators (SPI) for 2007/2008 in comparison with other Scottish Councils, taking into consideration the explanations for performance as set out in Report 09/182 and responses from officers, be noted.
- (ii) The contents of Report 09/182 be considered in conjunction with each Service's Annual Performance Report as SPI results do not provide a comprehensive overview of Perth and Kinross Council's performance and should not be considered in isolation.
- (iii) Any issues arising for individual Services be taken forward and reported to the appropriate Committee for consideration.
- (iv) In areas of significant improvement, staff be congratulated for their efforts.
- (v) Any improvements identified through monitoring progress as set out in paragraph 9.4 of Report 09/182 be contained within six-monthly performance reports.
- (vi) It be noted that a report would be submitted to a future meeting of the Scrutiny Committee and the Lifelong Learning Committee on the outcome of the sickness absence review of teaching staff being carried out.

MR D STEWART, W ATKINSON, M WALKER, H JACK AND R GOLDSMITH LEFT THE MEETING AT THIS POINT.

183. AUDIT OF HOUSING BENEFIT SERVICES AND ADMINISTRATION

There was submitted a report by the Executive Director (Housing and Community Care) (09/183) (1) outlining to the Committee the new Housing Benefit audit function of Audit Scotland in relation to the administration of Housing and Council Tax Benefits, and (2) setting out their most recent findings from an inspection conducted in October 2008 of Perth and Kinross Council's benefit section.

It was noted that this report had been considered by the Housing and Health Executive Sub-Committee at its meeting on 21 January 2009 (Art 56 (iii)) when the recommendations in the report were accepted. The Scrutiny Committee was asked to consider the findings of the review and make any recommendations as appropriate.

C Brandon, Housing and Community Care, was present to answer members' questions on the report.

Resolved:

- (i) The contents of Report 09/183 be noted.
- (ii) It be remitted to the Audit Sub-Committee to carry out follow-up on the actions identified as part of their on-going follow-up work.

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H TURLEY, L CAMERON AND C BRANDON LEFT THE MEETING AT THIS POINT.

184. GROUNDS MAINTENANCE REVIEW (Art 677/08)

To inform the review being undertaken on grounds maintenance, the Committee heard presentations on the following:

(i) Grounds Maintenance

Lesley-Ann Cassidy, the Environment Service, gave a presentation on the Schedule of Works for Grounds Maintenance, detailing frequency of operations and the issues arising from environmental and other factors.

G STEVENSON LEFT THE MEETING AT THIS POINT.

(ii) Take a Pride in Perthshire Campaign

Euna Scott, the Environment Service, gave a presentation on the development of the Take a Pride in Perthshire Campaign since its launch in 1993 to the current level of 33 constituted voluntary groups with 342 members. She highlighted the successes achieved by the excellent working partnership between the public, private and voluntary sectors which improved the local environment, created a sense of civic pride, enhanced the quality of life and benefited the tourist economy of Perth and Kinross.

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