

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of Meeting of the AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held in Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells on Thursday, 26 October 2017 at 10.00 am

Present:- Councillors S. Bell (Chairman), H. Anderson, K. Chapman, S. Hamilton (Vice-Chairman), N. Richards, H. Scott, R. Tatler and E. Thornton-Nicol
Apologies:- Councillor J. A. Fullarton.
In Attendance:- Chief Executive, Clerk to the Council, Democratic Services Officer (P Bolson).

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairman welcomed those present to the meeting.

2. SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2017-2019

- 2.1 There had been circulated copies of a briefing note by the Chief Executive explaining the background to the proposed Scrutiny Work programme for 2017–2019. At its meeting on 28 June 2017, Members of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee had suggested a number of areas for review, with a further two subjects being added to that list since then. Members were advised that, in keeping with the remit of the Committee, the focus should be on their strategic role. It would not therefore be appropriate for reviews to look at operational matters such as the detailed implementation of individual projects but it would be relevant for reviews to scrutinise delivery against a plan, or benefit realisation against a target. Scrutinising risk policy process and management for example would be appropriate but not the individual risk registers for specific projects.
- 2.2 The briefing note itemised each area that had been suggested for review, the Lead Officer where appropriate and the proposed outcome or action. During discussion, Members were advised that reviews should look at end to end processes, including scrutiny that: processes were robust and transparent; how reports were monitored throughout the term; and how these processes were delivered across the whole Council. Members acknowledged that their remit did not include scrutinising each area or project to operational level and in terms of Risk Management, noted that this was an operational matter and was therefore the responsibility of officers.
- 2.3 Members went on to discuss each review topic in turn and agreed outcomes and actions for each.
- (a) Health and Social Care Integration Joint Board – the proposed outcome was for the Committee to gain a greater understanding of how the Integration Joint Board delivered the Health and Social Care Strategic Plan to improve the lives of Borderers. Members agreed that this item should be taken forward as a presentation initially, with the option to review at a later date. The Lead Officer would be Mr McCulloch-Graham, Chief Officer Health and Social Care. Provision of Services by SB Cares – Members agreed that this be combined with the presentation on Health and Social Care Integration Joint Board. Following the presentation, a decision would then be made as to whether Provision of Services by SB Cares would go forward as a Review in the Scrutiny work programme. The presentation should include information on the performance of SB Cares in relation to the aims and targets set within SB Cares Business Plan and contain an assessment of the organisation's capacity to adequately meet current and future

demand for its services within the current and projected financial constraints. The Lead Officer would be Mr Philip Barr, Managing Director of SB Cares.

- (b) IT within Scottish Borders Council - the proposed outcome was to confirm that the deliverables set out in the ICT programme were in place to deliver the business transformation programme and other corporate plan outcomes of the Council. Following discussion, Members agreed that Business World/ERP would be incorporated into a combined presentation on both of these items. The Lead Officer would be Mr David Robertson, Chief Financial Officer.
- (c) Waste Disposal Plant at Easter Langlee – it had been suggested this was the subject of an information briefing for all Members as part of the Members Development Programme. Following discussion, Members agreed that this item be deferred until the decision of the Planning and Building Standards Committee was known.
- (d) Managing Risk within Major Capital Projects – Members agreed that this be the subject of an information briefing for all Members as part of the Members Development Programme and that it could be brought into the Scrutiny Work Programme for review at a later date if required.
- (e) Community Access to Schools - the proposed outcome was to ensure that community groups and the public were aware of and able to make full use of available infrastructure in schools for learning, leisure and sport. Members were advised that when new schools were being built, the facilities available within the campus would be made available to the whole community and that these arrangements would be communicated to the wider public at that time. The Lead Officer would be Mr Martin Joyce, Service Director Assets & Infrastructure.
- (f) Provision of Janitorial and Cleaning Services – Members agreed that this would be the subject of an information briefing for all Members as part of the Members Development Programme.
- (g) Provision of Services by SB Cares – Members agreed that this be combined with the presentation on Health and Social Care Integration Joint Board referred to in paragraph 2.3(a) above.
- (h) Provision of Services by Live Borders – Members agreed that this item would be the subject of an information briefing for all Members as part of the Members Development Programme and that it would include information on the performance of Live Borders in relation to the aims and targets set within Live Borders Business Plan and evaluate the organisation’s relative performance across its broad remit to provide leisure, sport, cultural and community services.
- (i) Contract Management – Members agreed that this item be deleted from the Scrutiny work programme.
- (j) Following the Public Pound – Members agreed that the outcome of this would be to assess whether adequate and robust governance mechanisms and procedures were in place to protect the Council’s interest when administering public funding through a third party, and, where required, strengthen these procedures to ensure that the Council could comprehensively ensure good governance of public funds through third parties. During discussion, Members were advised that strict processes were in place in relation to Following the Public Pound, including those required for any Community Grant funding by SBC. It was agreed that a briefing for Members be provided on how “value for money” was measured across the range of grant funding available from the Council. The Lead Officer would be Jenni Craig, Service Director Customer and Communities.

- (k) Performance Criteria and Outcomes on Common Good Funds – the Committee was advised that the Trustees of the Common Good Funds ie the Elected Members made the decisions as to whether grants were managed in a sustainable way for future generations and this was not a matter for Scrutiny review. It was agreed that this item be removed from the Scrutiny work programme and further work be progressed out-with the Committee to look at how all Common Good Funds operated across the area.
 - (l) Business World/ERP – Members agreed that this would be incorporated into the presentation on IT within Scottish Borders Council, as detailed in paragraph 2.3(b) above.
 - (m) Procurement Process – Members agreed that this would be the subject of a presentation for all Members as part of the Members Development Programme and that the item could be added to the work programme at a later date as determined by the Committee if required.
- 2.4 With reference to the proposed review on the Cost of Delivery of Services per Person across the Council, Members were advised that a “like for like” comparison across other Local Authorities would be difficult, given that Councils calculated these costs in a number of different ways. The information Members had requested could be provided using data from the Local Government Benchmarking Framework. It was agreed that this item be removed from the work programme and it was further noted that a private Members’ Briefing would be arranged in advance of publication of benchmarking data.
- 2.5 Members were advised that there were two outstanding update reports carried forward from the previous Scrutiny Committee, namely Home Schooling; and Review of 2G and 3G pitches. These reports were due for presentation in February 2018 and June 2018 respectively.
- 2.6 The amended Scrutiny work programme would be presented to the Committee on 30 November 2017 and to full Council in December 2017 for approval.

DECISION

(a) NOTED that:-

- (i) in respect of Community Access to Schools, when new schools were built, the facilities available within the campus would be made available to the whole community and that these arrangements would be communicated to the wider public at the time; and**
- (ii) a private briefing would be provided to Members prior to the publication of the Local Government Benchmarking Framework data.**

(b) AGREED:-

- (i) the following items be included in the Scrutiny Work Programme:**
 - (1) Health and Social Care Integration Joint Board and the provision of services by SB Cares;**
 - (2) IT within Scottish Borders Council;**
 - (3) Community access to schools;**
 - (4) Update report on Home Schooling; and**

- (5) Update report on 2G and 3G pitches;**
- (ii) that Members receive briefings as part of the Members Development Programme on the following:**
 - (1) Waste Disposal Plant at Easter Langlee;**
 - (2) Managing Risks within Major Capital projects;**
 - (3) Provision of Janitorial and Cleaning services;**
 - (4) Provision of services by Live Borders;**
 - (5) How Value for Money is measured against the range of grant funding provided by Council; and**
 - (6) Procurement processes.**
- (iii) the following items not be taken forward for consideration by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee:**
 - (1) Contract Management;**
 - (2) Performance Criteria and Outcomes on Common Good Funds; and**
 - (3) Cost of Delivery of Services per Person across the Council; and**
- (iv) a report be presented to Audit and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 30 November 2017 with details of the final Scrutiny Work Programme.**

The meeting concluded at 10.50 am