

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, 7 June 2018 at 10.00 am

Present:- Councillors S Bell (Chairman), H Anderson, S Hamilton, N Richards, H Scott, and E Thornton-Nicol.
Apologies:- Councillor K Chapman, J A Fullarton, R Tatler
In Attendance:- Managing Director SB Cares, Chief Financial Officer (section 4-7), Clerk to the Council, Democratic Services Officer (J Turnbull).

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairman welcomed those present to the meeting.

2. MINUTE

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of 14 May 2018.

DECISION

APPROVED the Minutes for signature by the Chairman.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTE

With reference to paragraph 3(ii) of the Minute of the 14 May 2018, the Clerk to the Council advised that Scottish Borders Council's Scheme of Administration currently allowed for an overview, under the Major Contracts Governance Group, of any significant contracts and agreements with Trusts. It was therefore agreed to mark as completed, the Audit and Scrutiny Action Tracker entries on 15 January 2018 and 19 March 2018 relating to Live Borders and CGI respectively.

DECISION

AGREED to mark as completed the Audit and Scrutiny Action Tracker entries on 15 January 2018 and 19 March 2018 relating to the Scheme of Administration in respect of Live Borders and CGI and the Major Contracts Governance Group.

4. SB CARES

4.1 With reference to paragraph 2 of the Minute of 30 November 2017, the Chairman welcomed Mr Philip Barr - Managing Director SB Cares, Ms Lynn Mirley - SB Cares' Finance and Commercial Director, and Mr Paul Cathrow - SB Cares' Independent Living & Corporate Service Manager. Mr Barr explained that the SB Cares' Business Plan, which had been circulated with the agenda, detailed the strategic aims, priorities and key activities for 2017-2022, and his presentation would focus on SB Cares' current activities including recruitment, training, communications, quality of care and financial overview.

4.2 Mr Barr began by advising that SB Cares had established a comprehensive training programme to ensure the provision of high quality care, improved management and increased productivity and efficiency. Referring to recruitment, Mr Barr acknowledged there had been difficulties recruiting Home Carers, particularly in Tweeddale and Berwickshire. However, the introduction of a continual recruitment programme, together with regular, fortnightly induction training, had substantially improved the recruitment process. This had reduced pressures on staff and improved the quality of care. With regard to public relations, Mr Barr advised that SB Cares would be establishing a rolling

programme of communications to improve engagement with clients, staff and stakeholders. SB Cares also reported to the Major Contracts Governance Group and had carried out performance surveys with clients and clients' families.

- 4.3 Mr Barr then referred to SB Cares' Care Inspectorate score, highlighting the improvement since 2016. The highest Care Inspectorate score was six and 85% of SB Cares' scores had been four and above. However, the score had been affected by the necessity to introduce robust measures to one care home and improvements required in terms of leadership between managers, clients and front line staff. Mr Barr explained that SB Cares had developed action plans to implement the Care Inspectorate's recommendations which would improve recruitment, induction and training. Part of this was the introduction of a four days on/four days off shift pattern for Home Carers. There had also been improvements to the management structure with the appointment of a Service Manager Quality & Performance who would focus on improving quality across the service, performance management, implementing best practice models and identifying efficiencies. SB Cares was also working with Border College and had now established Senior Support Workers. These new positions would be client facing and enhance communication between Home Carers, management and clients as well as introducing career progression within the service. Other new appointments were the Independent Living & Corporate Services Manager (Mr Cathrow) and the Corporate & Commercial Services Team Leader, who would deliver a better return in terms of the commercial model.
- 4.4 Mr Barr concluded his presentation by discussing SB Cares' financial position for 2018/19 explaining that SB Cares did not make a profit and savings were invested back into the service. Cumulative savings were: £480k in 2015/16, £1.560m during 2016/17 and £2,505m during 2017/18. Savings had been realised through efficiencies, increasing productivity and eliminating unnecessary travel. There would, however, be pressure on savings in 2018/19 with Social Work's proposals to reduce or re-provision existing services which would impact on SB Cares' financial position.
- 4.5 Mr Cathrow then went on to discuss the delivery model for SB Cares' Commercial service. In the short term this would concentrate on sales of additional alarm monitoring services, including fire safety, falls prevention and dementia monitoring, for which there was a market. There would also be opportunities to sell equipment to support living independently at home, such as bath lifts and riser recliner chairs. Over the medium term SB Cares would explore expansion of lone worker monitoring, commercial disinfection services and provision of equipment and telecare to the third and private sectors. In the longer term they would consider delivery of paid for care services, including home care, respite and providing services through an accommodation based care model. Mr Barr added that the SB Cares' equipment was of a high standard and it was not their intention to compete based on price. There was an existing good relationship with SB Cares' partners in the NHS and Social Work which would enable equipment to be provided at short notice, and, going forward, it was anticipated that SB Cares could provide commercial packages to registered social landlords. In response to questions, Mr Cathrow confirmed there was a catalogue detailing all equipment available to buy, with a demonstration facility located at Tweedbank for clients. Although SB Cares did not have a marketing plan, he considered that once the success, or otherwise, of the commercial project was established, they would take this forward. With regard to Home Carers on a commercial basis, he considered that because of the rurality of the Scottish Borders, SB Cares would not have the capacity to offer this service. He further advised that, in the future it might be possible for SB Cares to engage occupational therapists, although he considered the provision of community physiotherapists would need further investigation and may not be viable.

5. PRIVATE BUSINESS

AGREED under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the business detailed

in the Appendix to the Minute on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 6 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

SUMMARY OF PRIVATE BUSINESS

6. BORDERCARE ALARM SERVICE

The Committee received an update on charges and savings from the Managing Director SB Cares.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

7. SB CARES CONTINUED

7.1 Further discussion followed and Members raised a number of questions. In response to a question as to why there was no increase in staffing expenditure shown in the Business Plan, Mr Barr would investigate and advise out with the meeting. However, he highlighted that any national increase in wages was covered by the Council. Moreover, SB Cares hoped to introduce changes to the home care assessment process. He explained that currently, client's assessments were carried out when the client was in hospital, at their most vulnerable, requiring a high level, home care package, which was then maintained. However, once the client's health improved the home care package could be reassessed with a subsequent reduction in staffing costs. Home Carers were best placed to request these reassessments and as training improved it was hoped to take this forward. In respect of the provision of a locality based service based on social work localities, Mr Barr explained that they worked closely with partners to deliver services on a locality basis. Ms Mirley confirmed that the east locality area covered Kelso and Duns and they did not envisage this changing. Mr Barr went on to advise that as the Scottish Borders was a popular place for retirement, the need for elderly care would therefore increase. Going forward, SB Cares might explore opportunities with registered social landlords for the provision of homes for the elderly, extra care housing, care homes in both the public and private sector and also provision in terms of town centre regeneration. The Chief Financial Officer added that Corporate Management Team had the previous day considered the Integrated Strategic Plan for Older People which looked at a range of provision of care including care homes, dementia units and specialist housing, while recognising the scale of demand. The Plan would be presented to Council in due course. With regard to the situation of Cordia (Services) LLP in Glasgow and if there could be a similar risk to SB Cares, Mr Robertson explained that the Cordia issue had arisen because they had tried to change staffing terms and conditions which had led them into problems with trade unions and political accountability, while SB Cares had been set up completely differently.

7.2 The Chairman thanked SB Cares officers for attending and for providing a copy of the SB Cares' Business Plan, in advance of the meeting, which had been informative. The presentation had been reassuring in terms of the progress being made in terms of SB Cares' management, training, recruitment and commercial developments.

DECISION

NOTED the presentation.

8. SCRUTINY REVIEW PROGRAMME

There had been circulated copies of the Scrutiny Work Programme for 2018/19. It was noted that after the summer recess, Scrutiny would review the delivery of the IT Strategy and Plan - the last review under the original programme. The Clerk to the Council, Ms Wilkinson, advised of the need to develop a programme for 2019/20, for approval by full Council. Following discussion, a number of areas for Review were suggested –

- Staff/Councillor guidance and training/re-fresher training on staff disciplinary procedures, including hearings, appeals and Industrial Tribunals (Cllr H Scott)
- Amey - Trunk Roads management (Cllr S Hamilton)

- Impact of Brexit on the Scottish Borders – mechanisms in place to monitor (Cllr H Anderson)
- ALEOS and Live Borders - performance monitoring process (Cllr H Anderson)
- Information coming before Councillors in the form of reports (Cllr S Bell)
- Co-wheels contract – impact and expansion (Cllr E Thornton-Nicol)

DECISION

- (a) **NOTED** the list of work undertaken by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee during 2018/19.
- (b) **AGREED:**
- (i) **that other Councillors be asked to submit areas for Scrutiny and a briefing on what constituted a strategic review be sent out as guidance; and**
 - (ii) **a draft Programme for Reviews for Scrutiny be presented to the Committee in September for consideration.**

9. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee was scheduled to take place on Tuesday, 26 June 2018.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

The meeting concluded at 11.55 am