

AUDIT & PERFORMANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE

At a Meeting of the Audit & Performance Review Committee held in the Council Chambers, Clydebank Town Hall, Dumbarton Road, Clydebank on Wednesday 25 February 2004 at 11.00 a.m.

Present: Councillors Jackie Maceira, Margaret Bootland, Geoff Calvert, Gail Casey and James McCallum.

Attending: Eric Walker, Director of Corporate Services; Lynn Bradley, Head of Finance; Vincent Gardiner, Manager of Exchequer; Louise Love, Section Head (Internal Audit); Jeff Stobo, Strategy Manager and Joe Reilly, Section Head (Resources), Social Work and Housing Services; Russell Fleming, Head of Resources, Commercial and Technical Services; Liz Cochrane, Principal Policy Officer; Lewis Morrison, Policy Officer (Best Value); Amanda Watson, Policy Officer (Performance Review & Corporate Planning) and George Hawthorn, Senior Administrative Officer, Legal and Administrative Services.

Also Attending: Gavin Stevenson, Chief Auditor; Elaine Barrowman, Senior Audit Manager and Angus Brown, Audit Senior, Audit Scotland.

Apology: An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Councillor Jim Bollan.

Councillor Jackie Maceira in the Chair

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

1948 The Minutes of Meeting of the Audit & Performance Review Committee held on 26 November 2003 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

MANAGING THE RELATIONSHIP WITH ARMS' LENGTH ORGANISATIONS

1949 With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the Committee held on 26 November 2003 (Page 399, paragraph 1181 refers), a report was submitted by the Director of Corporate Services providing an update on the progress made in respect of the management of the relationship between the Council and arms' length organisations.

1950 Having heard the Head of Finance in further explanation, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note that a meeting had been held on Monday 23 February 2004 to discuss new procedures for grant applications and that it was anticipated that a report would be presented to the meeting of Council in March seeking approval of the new grants application pack; and
- (2) to note the updated position as detailed in the report.

PROPOSALS FOR BEST VALUE REVIEWS IN 2004/05

- 1951 With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the Committee held on 26 November 2003 (pages 400/401, paragraph 1189 refers), a report was submitted by the Chief Executive providing information on the proposed Best Value Reviews for 2004/2005.
- 1952 After discussion and having heard the Policy Officer (Best Value) in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed that the report be remitted to the meeting of Council in March in order to allow all Members of the Council to consider the recommendations in respect of the proposed reviews for 2004/2005.
- 1953 It was also noted that officers would re-circulate the criteria used by the Best Value Strategy Group to identify the service areas to be reviewed.

VARIATION IN ORDER OF BUSINESS

- 1954 Having heard Councillor Maceira, the Committee agreed to vary the order of business as hereinafter minuted.

BEST VALUE REVIEW OF THE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

- 1955 With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the Committee held on 26 November 2003 (Pages 400/401, paragraph 1189 refers), a report was submitted by the Director of Economic, Planning and Environmental Services providing information on the final report from the Best Value Review of the West Dunbartonshire Community Safety Partnership.
- 1956 Having heard the Policy Officer (Best Value) in further explanation, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

UPDATE ON THE SAFFRON HOUSING RENTS SYSTEM

- 1957 Having heard the Convener, the Committee noted that the report in respect of this item had been withdrawn from the Agenda but that the issue could be discussed later in the meeting under the item headed "Progress Against Audit Action Plan 2003/04".

MONITORING EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

- 1958 A report was submitted by the Chief Executive informing of the outcome of monitoring equal opportunities at a departmental/service level.
- 1959 Having heard the Policy Officer (Performance Review & Corporate Planning) in further explanation and the Head of Personnel in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to note the terms of the report.

COUNCIL TAX SERVICE – BEST VALUE REVIEW

- 1960 A report was submitted by the Director of Corporate Services on the review of Council Tax practices and performance undertaken over the past 18 months and presenting recommendations regarding service delivery.
- 1961 Having heard the Director of Corporate Services and after discussion, the Committee agreed:-
- (1) to note the findings of the Council Tax Best Value Review;
 - (2) to continue consideration of the report to the next meeting to allow further discussions to take place between officers from Corporate Services and Social Work and Housing Services in respect of issues arising from the proposal for the integration of some Council Tax and Housing Benefit services; and
 - (3) to note that officers would take on board the comments expressed by Members in relation to the extension of electronic communications via the internet.

BEST VALUE STRATEGIC REVIEW OF ACCESS FOR PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY

- 1962 With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the Committee held on 26 November 2003 (Pages 400/401, paragraph 1189 refers), a report was submitted by the Director of Commercial and Technical Services providing information on a Best Value Strategic Review that had been undertaken to consider how accessible Council buildings and services were for people with a disability and making recommendations thereon.
- 1963 After hearing the Resource Manager, Commercial and Technical Services and the Head of Personnel, in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-
- (1) to note the methodology of the Best Value Review which was used to provide information on best practice and effectively consult with service users;

- (2) that the report be referred to the Disability Working Group for comment and thereafter, a revised report which included those comments, be submitted to Council for consideration;
- (3) that a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee providing a stocktake of all corporate in-house training which covers elements of training on equality and disability issues; and
- (4) that a report be submitted to a next meeting of the Committee on the issue of validation of training.

DEPARTMENTAL RISK REGISTERS

- 1964 A report was submitted by the Director of Corporate Services providing an update on the development of departmental risk registers.
- 1965 Having heard the Head of Finance in further explanation, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

PROGRESS AGAINST AUDIT ACTION PLAN 2002/03

- 1966 A report was submitted by the Director of Corporate Services providing a progress report on the actions taken by officers in response to the recommendations contained in Audit Scotland's 2002/03 report to Members.
- 1967 Having heard the Head of Finance and Ms Barrowman (Audit Scotland) in further explanation and the Section Head (Resources), Social Work and Housing Services, in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-
- (1) to note that the Council was making progress against the nine recommendations set out in the Action Plan agreed with Audit Scotland; and
 - (2) to continue to monitor progress on the implementation of the Action Plan.

AUDIT PLANNING MEMORANDUM 2003/04

- 1968 A report was submitted by the Director of Corporate Services presenting Audit Scotland's Audit Planning Memorandum 2003/04 to the Committee for information.
- 1969 After hearing Mr Stevenson and Mr Brown (Audit Scotland) in further explanation, the Committee agreed:-
- (1) to note the contents of Audit Scotland's Audit Planning Memorandum 2003/2004; and

- (2) to note that the audit fee was £238,900 and that appropriate provision had been made within the draft revenue estimates.

INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT TO 31 DECEMBER 2003

- 1970 A report was submitted by the Director of Corporate Services advising of the work undertaken by the Internal Audit Section against the Audit Plan 2003/04.
- 1971 Having heard the Section Head (Internal Audit) in further explanation, the Committee agreed to note the terms of the report.

SICKNESS ABSENCE STATISTICS – QUARTER 3: 2003/2004

- 1972 A report was submitted by the Director of Corporate Services informing on the levels of employee absence during the 3 month period 1 October 2003 – 31 December 2003.
- 1973 Having heard the Head of Personnel and after discussion, the Committee agreed to note the terms of the report.

The meeting closed at 12.10 p.m.