

AUDIT & PERFORMANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE

At a Meeting of the Audit & Performance Review Committee held in the Council Chambers, Municipal Buildings, Station Road, Dumbarton on Wednesday, 14 September 2005 at 10.05 a.m.

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

Attending: Gerry McNerney, Director of Corporate Services; Dan Henderson, Director of Development and Environmental Services; David Connell, Head of Finance; Gillian Jump, Manager of Accounting; Colin McDougall, Section Head, Internal Audit; Louise Love, Section Head (Operations), Internal Audit; Jim Pow, Manager of Finance (Housing and Technical Services); David Webster, Section Head (Performance Management); Miriam McKenna, Policy and Development Officer (Diversity); Lorne Campbell, External Funding Officer and Craig Stewart, Administrative Assistant, Legal and Administrative Services.

Also Elaine Barrowman, Senior Audit Manager and Angela Cassels,
Attending: Assistant Director of Audit, Audit Scotland.

* Attended later in meeting.

Councillor Jackie Maceira in the Chair

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

7035 The Minutes of Meeting of the Committee held on 29 June 2005 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

URGENT ITEM OF BUSINESS

7036 The Convener, in terms of Section 50B (4) (b) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as inserted by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985, decided that the following item be considered as a matter of urgency on the grounds that the action to be taken required early consideration.

AUDIT OF WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL 2004/05 STATEMENT OF AUDITING STANDARD 610

7037 A letter from Ms. Angela Cassels, Assistant Director of Audit (Local Government) to Members of the Audit and Performance Review Committee providing information on a Statement of Auditing Standard 610 (SAS 610) 'Communication of audit matters to those charged with governance' was circulated for information.

7038 After discussion and having heard Ms. Cassels in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, it was agreed:-

- (1) to note the current position in respect of this matter; and
- (2) to extend the Committee's appreciation to everyone involved, for their hard work and dedication, in ensuring a satisfactory conclusion to the audit of the 2004/05 accounts.

NOTE: Councillor McCallum entered the meeting during discussion of the above item.

FOLLOW UP REVIEW OF HOUSING RENTS SYSTEM

7039 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing and Technical Services advising of the progress being made in addressing the issues raised by Audit Scotland in their audit of the Housing Rents System.

7040 Having heard the Manager of Finance the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the progress made to date in respect of this matter; and
- (2) that this item would continue to remain on the agenda of the Audit and Performance Review Committee until such time as the one remaining outstanding issue had been resolved.

ASSET MANAGEMENT PLANNING

7041 A report was submitted by the Director of Development and Environmental Services advising of work being undertaken in relation to Asset Management Planning and in particular the delivery of a Corporate Asset Management Plan.

7042 After discussion and having heard the Director of Development and Environmental Services in elaboration and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note and endorse the contents of the report;
- (2) to approve the structure and content proposed for the Asset Management Plan;
- (3) to note that a further progress report would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee for consideration;
- (4) that the matter of designating a Member, to ensure that asset management considerations are taken into account in policy and operational discussions at a political level, be continued to the next meeting of Council for determination; and
- (5) that in view of (4) above, a briefing note for Members be prepared on this matter.

BEST VALUE AUDIT

7043 A report was submitted by the Chief Executive providing an update on progress towards the forthcoming Audit of Best Value.

7044 After discussion, and having heard the Section Head (Performance Management) in further explanation, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the contents of the report; and
- (2) that it would be helpful if further training was made available to Members, particularly Conveners/Service Spokespersons, to support their involvement in the forthcoming audit.

QUALITY & SERVICE AWARDS

7045 A report was submitted by the Chief Executive informing on the progress of various quality and service awards.

7046 Having heard the Section Head (Performance Management), the Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

STRATEGIC PLANNING, BUDGETING AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

7047 A report was submitted by the Chief Executive providing an update on the progress of strategic planning, budgeting and performance management issues.

7048 After discussion and having heard the Section Head (Performance Management) in further explanation, it was agreed:-

- (1) that the contents of the report be noted;
- (2) that Members be encouraged to visit the 'performance' area in the Chief Executive's Section of the Council's Intranet site, to review the Statutory Performance Indicator (SPI) 'traffic-light' sheets; and
- (3) that a paper copy of the SPI sheets would be circulated to all Members as necessary.

CUSTOMER SERVICES: MYSTERY SHOPPING SURVEY

7049 A report was submitted by the Chief Executive providing an update with conclusions from the reports received from Mystery Shoppers Ltd.

7050 After discussion and having heard the Section Head (Performance Management) in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the results of the survey, albeit that it had a small sampling base; and
- (2) that the individual log sheets, completed for the survey in West Dunbartonshire, would be circulated to Members for information.

PUBLIC PERFORMANCE REPORTING: PROGRESS REPORT

7051 A report was submitted by the Chief Executive providing an update on the publication of financial and performance information.

7052 Having heard the Section Head (Performance Management), the Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

BEST VALUE SERVICE REVIEWS

7053 A report was submitted by the Chief Executive reviewing progress on the current Best Value Service Review programme.

7054 After discussion and having heard the Section Head, Performance Management in further explanation, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the contents of the report; and
- (2) that a list of reports in relation to completed Best Value Service Reviews would be submitted to the Audit & Performance Review Committee, as appropriate.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DEPARTMENT: QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REVIEW

7055 A report was submitted by the Chief Executive informing on the performance of the Chief Executive's Department for the period April 2005 to June 2005.

7056 After discussion and having heard the Section Head (Performance Management), the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the contents of the report; and
- (2) that performance information relating to the Chief Executive's Department would be submitted to the Council, and not the Audit & Performance Review Committee, in future.

EMPLOYMENT MONITORING BY ETHNICITY

7057 A report was submitted by the Chief Executive informing of the monitoring, by ethnicity, of job applications, staff in post across the Council and employees who receive training, and what further work is required in order to meet the Race Equality Scheme specific duty on employment.

7058 After discussion and having heard the Policy and Development Officer (Diversity) in further explanation, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the information contained in the report; and
- (2) to support the implementation of more robust monitoring systems to enable the collection of the required information.

EXTERNAL FUNDING – PERFORMANCE AND DEVELOPMENTS

7059 A report was submitted by the Chief Executive providing an update on Council performance in attracting Lottery funding during 2004; external funding issues affecting West Dunbartonshire Council, current initiatives organised by the External Funding Officer and major applications pending.

7060 After discussion and having heard the External Funding Officer in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to note the information contained in the report.

INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT TO 30 JUNE 2005

- 7061 A report was submitted by the Director of Corporate Services advising of the work undertaken by the Internal Audit Section against the Audit Plan 2004/05.
- 7062 The Committee agreed to note the report.

REVIEW OF ARRANGEMENTS FOR COMPLYING WITH THE PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURE ACT

- 7063 A report was submitted by the Director of Corporate Services advising of changes to the Council's arrangements for confidential reporting.
- 7064 After discussion and having heard the Section Head (Internal Audit) and the Director of Corporate Services, the Committee agreed:-
- (1) to note the developments relating to Confidential Reporting in the Council; and
 - (2) that a copy of the Council's policy on "Confidential Reporting" which was approved in 2000 would be submitted to the next meeting of the Joint Consultative Forum for information.

SICKNESS ABSENCE

- 7065 A report was submitted by the Director of Corporate Services:-
- (a) informing on the levels of employee absence during the 3 month period 1 April to 30 June 2005; and
 - (b) providing an update on management actions taken in tackling absence within their department.
- 7066 After discussion and having heard the Director of Corporate Services in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, it was agreed:-
- (1) to note the contents of the report; and
 - (2) that the Committee's appreciation be extended to Departments for current and proposed actions being taken to deal effectively with this matter.

TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2004/2005

- 7067 A report was submitted by the Director of Corporate Services providing an update on treasury management during 2004/2005.
- 7068 Having heard the Manager of Accounting, the Committee agreed:-
- (1) to note, with satisfaction, the treasury management stewardship report for 2004/05; and
 - (2) to approve the 2004/05 actual prudential indicators detailed within the report.

BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLANNING

- 7069 A report was submitted by the Director of Corporate Services providing an update on the Business Continuity Project Plan.
- 7070 Having heard the Head of Finance, the Committee agreed to note the progress made to date in terms of completing the Business Continuity Project Plan.

URGENT ITEM OF BUSINESS

- 7071 The Convener, in terms of Section 50B (4) (b) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as inserted by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985, decided that the following item be considered as a matter of urgency on the grounds that the action to be taken required early consideration.

AUDIT COMMITTEE TRAINING

- 7072 A letter was submitted from CIPFA Scotland providing information on a new one day training course for audit committees, the objective of which was to raise the standard and effectiveness of audit committees within local government. It was noted that the course would be held in the Apex European Hotel, Edinburgh on 4 October 2005 at a cost of £225 + VAT per delegate.
- 7073 It was agreed that Councillors Bootland, Casey and McCallum would attend this training course.

The meeting closed at 11.48 a.m.