

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Chief Executive

Council : 30 January 2008

Subject: Remit of the Audit & Performance Review Committee

1. Purpose

- 1.1** This report provides an update on the review of the remit of the Audit & Performance Review Committee (A&PRC), and requests Council's agreement of the revised remit.

2. Background

- 2.1** On 29 August 2007, Council agreed the remits of the new committees, however the decision on the role and remit of the A&PRC was continued to allow the views of all Elected Members, (including newly Elected Members), to be added to the review of the A&PRC which had been undertaken prior to the elections.
- 2.2** These issues were considered further by the A&PRC on 18 September 2007, and following this, a number of recommendations were made to Council on 26 September 2007. These were:-
- To recommend to Council the proposed revised role and remit for the A&PRC, with the amendment that the quorum proposed in paragraph 1.2 should be revised from 3 to 5. The aim of this amendment was to emphasise the Council's commitment to effective scrutiny by ensuring maximum attendance by Elected Members.
 - To recommend that Councillor George Black be appointed as Vice Convener of the A&PRC.
 - To recommend to Council that the A&PRC should be given powers to call on external experts to participate in specific reviews.

On the basis of these views, a revised remit for the A&PRC was prepared – see **Appendix 1**.

- 2.3** In addition, the A&PRC noted that it had requested a further report on the issues surrounding the appointment of lay members to the committee. This was to include suggestions for the criteria which might be used to define the type of person best suited, and also proposals for processes of election or appointment. It was suggested that, following consideration of this report, the A&PRC might wish to make further recommendations to Council on the subject of lay members.

- 2.4** On the basis of this, Council, on 26 September, agreed to continue consideration of this item until the Audit and Performance Review Committee had considered the report on the proposal to have layperson membership of the Committee.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** At its meeting on 12 December 2007, the A&PRC considered a report on the key issues surrounding any proposal to include lay members on the committee. These were:-

- the role which lay members might play
- the possible number of lay members
- eligibility criteria
- the election or appointment processes which might be appropriate
- the skills and knowledge which lay members might require (and training opportunities)
- length of service
- remuneration and expenses

- 3.2** The report also noted that there had been some experience of involving lay members in similar committees in other Scottish local authorities.

- 3.3** Following some debate on the issues involved, the A&PRC agreed to recommend to Council that no decision should be taken meantime on the appointment of lay members.

4. Personnel Issues

- 4.1** There are no personnel issues, other than the resources required to organise selection/election process and training, if any decision is taken to appoint lay members.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1** The financial implications would relate to the resources required to organise any selection/election process, travel & subsistence expenses and training.

6. Risk Analysis

- 6.1** The A&PRC requires a clear remit. It is important that Council now agrees the core role and remit, whether or not there is then any further discussion on the issue of lay members.

- 6.2** The presence of lay members on the A&PRC would not pose a significant risk, as the committee does not have delegated powers, but could add to the quality of the scrutiny which is undertaken.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1** The A&PRC has considered and recommended a core role and remit for the Committee. This is attached as **Appendix 1**.
- 7.2** Further discussion on the possible inclusion of lay members on the committee resulted in a recommendation to Council that this should not proceed in the meantime.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1** Council is asked to approve the role and remit of the A&PRC as set out in **Appendix 1**.
- 8.2** Council is asked to agree whether it wishes any further consideration to be given to the matter of lay membership of the A&PRC.

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Chief Executive
Date: 11 January 2008

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Appendix 1: Draft Remit of A&PRC

Background Papers: Report to A&PRC Role and Remit of A&PRC
– 18 September 2007
Report to Council Role and Remit of A&PRC
– 26 September 2007
Report to A&PRC – Lay Membership
– 12 December 2007

Wards Affected: All

Draft Remit
Audit & Performance Review Committee

1. Membership/Arrangements for Meetings

- 1.1 The membership of the Audit and Performance Review Committee will comprise 8 Elected Members.
- 1.2 The quorum of the Audit and Performance Review Committee will be 5 Elected Members.
- 1.3 The Audit and Performance Review Committee will meet every second month.

2. General

The purpose and remit of Audit and Performance Review Committee is to:

- Monitor, and make recommendations on the development of, the Best Value and Continuous Improvement activity of the Council. This includes responsibilities under the Local Government (Scotland) Act 2003.
- Monitor, and make recommendations on, the Performance Management Planning activity of the Council.
- Monitor, and make recommendations on the development of, the Audit, Risk Management and Performance Review activity of the Council
- Scrutinise the monitoring and review activity of the thematic and regulatory committees

The Audit and Performance Review Committee will undertake a number of general responsibilities. These include:

- Monitoring and ensuring that the work of the committee, and the activities reported to the committee are responsive to the needs of local people
- Monitoring and ensuring that the views of local people, staff and other stakeholders are sought on relevant issues
- Promoting Social Inclusion and Equalities in all areas for which the committee has responsibility
- Promoting Health Improvement in all areas for which the committee has responsibility
- Promoting the development of relevant inter agency issues and supporting partnership working
- Monitoring performance targets (within the context of the Corporate and Service Planning processes), for the overall standards of service and to receiving reports on these
- Monitoring any capital expenditure in respect of the committee's activity
- Monitoring any revenue budgets in respect of the committee's activity

3. Best Value and Performance Review

The Audit and Performance Review Committee will oversee the development and will monitor the implementation of Best Value and continuous improvement. It will oversee the provision of statutory and other performance information. This may include:

- Commissioning and considering reports on the approaches to Best Value, Continuous Improvement and related matters (e.g. process, content, prioritisation, project management)
- Commissioning and considering reports on cross-cutting Best Value service reviews and other corporate continuous improvement and quality initiatives.
- Scrutinising performance of the Council's corporate plan, (and through this, the Council's contribution to the Community Plan)
- Commissioning and/or considering reports related to External Scrutiny of the Council or Council services, (including the Audit of Best Value and Community Planning)
- Scrutinising overall performance of Statutory and other Performance Indicators
- Considering reports on Scottish Executive Statutory Returns
- Monitoring the Council's Complaints System and related issues.
- Scrutinising reports on 'Efficient Government' matters and other corporate support issues
- Commissioning and considering further performance reviews and reports on areas of poor performance
- Commissioning and considering reviews and reports on areas of national, topical or local public interest or importance

4. Audit and Risk Management

The Audit and Performance Review Committee will develop and monitor the provision of relevant Audit and Risk Management services. This may include:

- Considering Annual/Strategic Audit Plans and performance reports.
- Considering other appropriate Internal Audit matters.
- Considering annual Audit Planning Memorandum.
- Considering External Audit reports/action plans.
- Considering Audit information from all departments
- Receiving reports on the Council's Corporate Governance arrangements, Risk Management, Civil Contingencies, Business Continuity, Emergency Planning, and Internal Financial Control Statements.

5. Delegated Powers

In general, the Audit & Performance Review Committee does not have delegated powers. All recommendations of the Audit & Performance Review Committee will be considered by Council, or by the appropriate committee.

As an exception to this, the Audit and Performance Review Committee has delegated powers to establish Sub-Committees and Working Groups to examine and report on specific issues.

The Audit & Performance Review Committee also has delegated powers to call upon external experts to participate in specific reviews, (subject to any costs involved being approved by Council).