

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, 20 September 2006 at 10.00 a.m.

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

Attending: Tim Huntingford, Chief Executive; David Connell, Head of Finance; Gillian Jump, Manager of Accounting; Lorraine Coyne, Manager of Audit; Colin McDougall, Section Head, Internal Audit; Joe Gillespie, Section Head (Operations); David Webster, Section Head (Performance Management); Miriam McKenna, Policy and Development Officer (Diversity); Stephen West, Manager of Resources (Social Work Services); and Craig Stewart, Administrative Officer, Legal and Administrative Services.

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

Councillor Jackie Maceira in the Chair

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Audit & Performance Review Committee held on 21 June 2006 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

AUDIT OF FINAL ACCOUNTS 2005/06

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive advising of Audit Scotland's findings in relation to the audit of the Financial Statements for 2005/06.

A proposed Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of West Dunbartonshire Council and the Accounts Commission for Scotland was circulated for information.

After discussion and having heard Ms. Angela Cassels, Assistant Director of Audit (Local Government) in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, it was agreed to note the findings of the audit of the financial statements as detailed in Audit Scotland's letter dated 14 September 2006.

TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2005/2006

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive providing an update on treasury management during 2005/06.

Having heard the Manager of Accounting, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the treasury management stewardship information within the report; and
- (2) to note the 2005/06 actual prudential indicators as advised within the report.

INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT TO 31 MARCH 2006

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive advising on the contents of the Assurance Statement given to the Head of Finance in support of the Statement of Internal Financial Control.

After discussion and having heard the Manager of Audit in explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRESS REPORT TO 30 JUNE 2006

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive advising of the work undertaken by the Internal Audit Section against the Audit Plan 2006/07.

Having heard the Manager of Audit, the Committee agreed to note the report.

ACTIVITY ON WHISTLEBLOWING HOTLINE

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive advising of the level of activity on the whistleblowing hotline since its launch on 6 March 2006.

After discussion and having heard the Section Head (Internal Audit) and the Chief Executive in elaboration and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to note the developments in relation to the Council's whistleblowing hotline.

REVIEW OF PROGRESS IN ACTIONING RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED WITHIN INTERNAL AUDIT & EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORTS

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive advising of the progress being made in actioning recommendations contained within key Internal Audit and External Audit reports which departmental management have committed to implementing.

After discussion and having heard the Section Head (Internal Audit) in elaboration and the Chief Executive in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

RISK MANAGEMENT PROGRESS REPORT

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive providing further information on work carried out to implement the Council's Risk Management obligations.

Having heard the Chief Executive, it was agreed:-

- (1) to note the progress being made in the development of the Council's Risk Management Programme;
- (2) that a more detailed report on this matter would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee for consideration; and
- (3) to note that the Head of Legal & Administrative Services and the Section Head (Risk Management) would be invited to attend the next meeting of the Committee in order to provide any further information/clarification on this issue.

STATUTORY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive providing a summary of the progress of the Statutory Performance Indicators for the year 05/06 and noting some issues relating to the reporting of these indicators.

In relation to Appendix 1 to the report concerning Ref. CM5 Collection Cost: Council Tax per dwelling, it was noted that the indicated figure in the Comments column was erroneous.

After discussion and having heard the Section Head (Performance Management), the Committee agreed to note the position on the performance of these indicators.

BEST VALUE SERVICE REVIEWS AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive reviewing progress on the current Best Value Service review programme and noting progress on a Continuous Improvement Model.

Having heard the Section Head (Performance Management) in elaboration, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the contents of the report; and
- (2) to note that the format of the Appendix to the report would be expanded in future to increase legibility.

MONITORING SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE STATUTORY RETURNS

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive informing of the results of monitoring Scottish Executive Statutory Returns for the period 1 April 2005 to 31 March 2006.

The Committee agreed to note the results of the monitoring exercise.

EXTERNAL FUNDING PERFORMANCE

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive providing an update on various matters in relation to External Funding performance.

After discussion and having heard the Chief Executive in explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note Council performance with regard to attracting Lottery funding during 2005 and so far in 2006;
- (2) to note issues affecting West Dunbartonshire Council in the External Funding environment;
- (3) to note current initiatives organised by the External Funding Officer aimed at increasing levels of External Funding coming to West Dunbartonshire; and
- (4) to note the activities of the External Funding Officer over the past year.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES MONITORING OF WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL EMPLOYEES

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive informing:-

- (a) of the monitoring by age, ethnicity, gender and disability of job applicants, staff in post across the Council and employees who receive training; and
- (b) on what further work was required in order to meet the Race Equality Scheme specific duty on Employment.

After discussion and having heard the Policy and Development Officer (Diversity), it was agreed:-

- (1) to note the information contained in the report; and
- (2) to note that the Council's ICT and Business Development Section would investigate an appropriate software model and cost and prepare a report on this matter for consideration at a future meeting of the Committee.

SICKNESS ABSENCE STATISTICS – QUARTER 1

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive informing on the levels of employee absence during the 3 month period 1 April to 30 June 2006.

After discussion and having heard the Chief Executive in explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the contents of the report; and
- (2) to note the actions that had been taken by Departments to reduce the level of sickness absence.

The meeting closed at 11.24 a.m.