

AUDIT COMMITTEE

At a Meeting of the Audit Committee held in the Council Chamber, Clydebank Town Hall, Dumbarton Road, Clydebank on Wednesday, 20 November 2019 at 2.00 p.m.

Present: Councillors Jim Brown, Karen Conaghan, Jonathan McColl, Martin Rooney and Brian Walker.

Attending: Joyce White, Chief Executive; Angela Wilson, Strategic Director – Transformation & Public Service Reform; Stephen West, Strategic Lead – Resources; Victoria Rodger, Strategic Lead – People & Technology; Malcolm Bennie, Strategic Lead – Communications, Culture, Communities & Facilities ;Colin McDougall, Audit & Risk Manager; Andi Priestman, Chief Internal Officer, Inverclyde Council; Amanda Coulthard, Performance & Strategy Manager; Gillian McNeilly, Finance Manager; Julie Slavin, Chief Financial Officer, West Dunbartonshire Health & Social Care Partnership; Stephen Daly, Citizen & Digital Services Manager and Craig Stewart, Committee Officer.

Also Attending: Ms Zahrah Mahmood, Senior Auditor and Ms Kirsten Sharp, Trainee Auditor, Audit Scotland.

Apologies: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors Daniel Lennie and John Millar, and Lay Member Mr Chris Johnstone.

Councillor John Mooney in the Chair

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

It was noted that there were no declarations of interest in any of the items of business on the agenda.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of Meeting of the Audit Committee held 25 September 2019 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

OPEN FORUM

The Committee noted that no open forum questions had been submitted by members of the public.

NOTES OF MEETINGS OF MEMBER/OFFICER WORKING GROUP ON NATIONAL NON-DOMESTIC RATES

The Notes of Meetings of the Member/Officer Working Group on National Non-Domestic Rates held on 12 June and 25 September 2019 were submitted for information and noted.

TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID-YEAR REPORT 2019/20

A report was submitted by the Strategic Lead – Resources providing Members with the further opportunity to scrutinise the Treasury Management Mid-Year report which was previously reported to Council on 30 October 2019.

The Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

AUDIT ACTION PLANS

A report was submitted by the Strategic Lead – Resources advising of:-

- (a) recently issued Internal Audit action plans; and
- (b) progress made against action plans previously issued contained within Internal Audit and External Audit reports.

After discussion and having heard the Audit & Risk Manager, the Strategic Director, Chief Executive, and relevant officers in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2019/20 – HALF-YEAR PROGRESS REPORT

A report was submitted by the Strategic Lead – Resources advising on progress at the half-year against the Audit Plan 2019/20.

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

AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL SELF-ASSESSMENT

A report was submitted by the Strategic Lead – Resources advising on the results of the annual self-assessment exercise carried out recently by the Chair of the Audit Committee and the Audit & Risk Manager.

After discussion and having heard the Audit & Risk Manager, Chief Executive, and the Senior Auditor, Audit Scotland, in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the progress of the agreed actions arising from the first self-assessment exercise carried out in 2018;
- (2) to note the self-assessment which formed Appendix 2 to the report and which showed that the Council's Audit Committee largely complied with Cipfa good practice and thereby could assess its performance as generally meeting the Cipfa requirements;
- (3) to approve the actions identified from this latest self-assessment and request that these are now progressed;
- (4) to note that progress on the completion of the agreed actions would be reported annually to the Audit Committee;
- (5) that subsequent reviews should take place every three years; and
- (6) to note the knowledge and skills framework for potential areas for development within the Elected Member development programme.

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE BEST VALUE ASSURANCE REPORT

A report was submitted by the Strategic Lead – Communications, Culture, Communities & Facilities providing an update on progress towards delivery of the improvement plan agreed with the Accounts Commission following the 2018 Best Value Assurance process of West Dunbartonshire Council.

After discussion and having heard the Performance & Strategy Manager and Chief Executive in further explanation of the report and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

SCOTTISH PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN COMPLAINTS REPORT 2018/19

A report was submitted by the Strategic Lead – Communications, Culture, Communities & Facilities presenting the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) report on complaints handling by West Dunbartonshire Council for the year 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019.

After discussion and having heard the Citizen & Digital Services Manager and the Chief Executive in further explanation of the report and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the information contained within the report;
- (2) to note a commitment to improve response times for complaints to ensure compliance with Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) timelines;
- (3) to encourage an improvement culture that welcomed complaints in any form so that the Council could capture all expressions of dissatisfaction and use this information to drive future improvements; and
- (4) to ensure each service uses the data provided to identify and progress improvement activity.

VALEDICTORY – COLIN McDOUGALL

Councillor Mooney, Chair, informed the Committee that this was the last meeting which Mr Colin McDougall, Audit & Risk Manager, would attend as he was retiring from Council Service at the end of December. On behalf of the Committee, Councillor Mooney thanked Mr McDougall for his hard work, dedication and commitment for over 30 years in local government and wished him a long and happy retirement. All of the other Members present concurred with the Chair's remarks and similarly took the opportunity to wish Mr McDougall well in retirement. In response, Mr McDougall thanked everyone for their kind words and advised that he had enjoyed his time working for West Dunbartonshire Council.

The meeting closed at 2.50 p.m.