

**MINUTES of MEETING of PERFORMANCE REVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held in the
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, KILMORY, LOCHGILPHEAD
on THURSDAY, 29 MAY 2014**

Present: Ian M M Ross (Chair)

Councillor John McAlpine
Councillor John Semple
Douglas Cowan, HIE
Paul Connelly, Scottish Fire and Rescue

Attending: Douglas Hendry, Executive Director of Customer Services
Cleland Sneddon, Executive Director of Community Services
Pippa Milne, Executive Director of Development and Infrastructure
Jane Fowler, Head of Improvement and HR
Bruce West, Head of Strategic Finance
Charles Reppke, Head of Governance and Law
Patricia O'Neill, Central Governance Manager
David Clements, IOD Programme Manager
Lesley Sweetman, Performance and Business Manager
Fiona Ferguson, Directorate Support Officer
Carolyn McAlpine, HR Officer – for item 7
Barry McEwan, Police Scotland – for item 4

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance at the Committee today and advised that several Councillors had submitted their apologies in order to attend the funeral of their former colleague Ron Simon.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were intimated by Councillor Gordon Blair, Councillor Maurice Corry, Councillor Anne Horn, Councillor Iain Angus MacDonald, Councillor Sandy Taylor and Sally Loudon, Chief Executive.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were intimated.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee of 27 February 2014 were approved as a correct record subject to the following amendment of item 6.

Item 6 should read:

The Committee were pleased to see the performance figures on detection rates but inquired as to why there were no figures on conviction rates. Barry McEwan explained that this was not something the Police could report on as these figures would need to come from the Crown Office. Further consideration could be given however to reporting on root causes of incidents e.g. alcohol/drugs and he would look into this for a future

report.

4. (a) SCRUTINY OF POLICE SCOTLAND

Barry McEwan, Local Police Commander presented the report to the Committee which provided a performance update for Quarter 4. Barry McEwan reported that in terms of performance it has been a good year even with the transition from Strathclyde Police to Police Scotland. Barry McEwan highlighted the key successes of Police Scotland within Argyll and Bute in Quarter 4 of 2013-2014.

Barry McEwan advised the Committee that he is continuing to work hard to get information on conviction rates from the Crown Office as requested by the Committee at the last meeting.

The Committee asked Barry McEwan to explain why he uses red and green indicators on the statistics. Barry McEwan advised that the red and green indicators were used as a management tool, in order to allow him to clearly see where improvement has been made. He advised that it does not mean that if the figures are at a good level, if a figure is shaded green it simply means that an improvement has been made.

The Committee requested clarification and further information on a number of items within the report which was provided and the Local Police Commander advised that he would address the concerns re the exterior condition of the Police Station in Tarbert.

Decision

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

(Ref: Report by Local Police Commander dated 29 May 2014, submitted)

(b) ARGYLL AND BUTE LOCAL POLICING PLAN FOR 2014-17

Barry McEwan presented Police Scotland's Local Policing Plan 2014-2017 for Argyll and Bute to the Committee. Barry McEwan advised that the priorities set out in the Local Policing Plan for 2014-2017 are similar to those set out in the 2013-14 Local Policing Plan. Barry McEwan advised that the Local Policing Plan had been created based on the results gathered from the public consultative process in which there were over 1000 respondents. He advised that all wards except one had identified Road Safety as their key priority and that this would continue to be a focus.

In response to questioning on the inclusion of the Ambulance Service in road safety matters the committee were advised that the Ambulance Service participated in the Community Planning Partnership.

Decision

The Committee agreed to:

1. Note the contents of the Argyll and Bute Local Policing Plan for 2014-17
2. Approve the Plan as a basis for scrutiny of Police Scotland activity in Argyll and Bute.

(Ref: Report by Executive Director of Customer Services and Argyll and Bute Local Policing Plan 2014-2017 dated 29 May 2014, submitted)

(c) SCRUTINY OF SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE

The Chair commended the Fire and Rescue Service on their approach to the Glasgow School of Art Fire and it was acknowledged that this was an example of an outstanding piece of fire craft and that a number of local officers had been involved.

Paul Connelly, Area Commander presented the report to the Committee which provided a performance update based on the priorities and objectives that were set out in the Local Fire Plan for Argyll and Bute 2013-2014 for quarter 4. Paul Connelly advised that similar to the Police Scotland Report, the traffic light indicators used in his report are indicators of improvements. Paul Connelly highlighted to the Committee that the level of accidental dwelling fires is at their lowest ever within Argyll and Bute and that is credit to not just Scottish Fire and Rescue but all the Community Planning Partners who have been working together to raise awareness.

Decision

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

(Ref: Report by Area Commander, Scottish Fire and Rescue dated 29 May 2014, submitted)

(d) LOCAL FIRE AND RESCUE PLAN FOR ARGYLL AND BUTE 2014-17

Paul Connelly introduced the Local Fire and Rescue Plan for 2014-2017 to the Committee. He reported that the Local Fire and Rescue Plan has clear links with Argyll and Bute Councils Single Outcome Agreement.

Decision

The Committee agreed to note the contents of the Local Fire and Rescue Plan for 2014-2017 and approve the plan as a basis for future scrutiny of Scottish Fire and Rescue activity in Argyll and Bute.

(Ref: Report by Executive Director of Customer Services and Local Fire and Rescue plan for Argyll and Bute 2014-17 dated 29 May 2014, submitted)

Paul Connelly and Barry McEwan left the meeting at this point.

5. STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER UPDATE

The Committee considered a report which updated the Committee on the progress in relation to developing Argyll and Bute Council's strategic risk register.

The Head of Strategic Finance advised the Committee that changes had been made to the Strategic Risk Register based on the feedback he had received at the recent members seminar.

The Committee noted the improvements made with regard to the format and the layout of the Strategic Risk Register, and asked if it would be possible for the Elected Members to have a further opportunity to comment on the Strategic Risk Register before it is submitted to the Council meeting in June for approval.

Decision

The Committee noted the progress of the Strategic Risk Register and agreed that the Head of Strategic Finance would issue the Strategic Risk Register to Elected Members prior to the June Council meeting to provide Elected Members with a final opportunity to provide feedback before the Council meeting in June.

(Ref: Report by Head of Strategic Finance dated 19 May 2014, submitted)

6. ANNUAL TREASURY REPORT 2013 - 14

The Committee considered a report which outlined the Council's Treasury Management position for 2013-2014. The Head of Strategic Finance advised the Committee that the Council's borrowing had remained unchanged over the 2013-2014 financial year.

In response to a discussion on benchmarking the Head of Strategic Finance agreed to look at this for future reports.

It was noted that this report also went to the Audit Committee for review and scrutiny.

Decision

The Committee noted the contents of the report and agreed that they had no comments to forward to Council.

(Ref: Report by Head of Strategic Finance dated 19 May 2014, submitted)

7. MAXIMISING ATTENDANCE : COUNCIL PERFORMANCE 2013/14

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on the Council's performance on maximising attendance during the period April 2013- March 2014.

In a response to a question over why these particular sickness categories had been used for recording absence, it was noted that these sickness categories has been recommended by Occupational Health however the statistics can be broken down into more specific reasons for absence.

The Committee continued to be concerned by the unacceptably high levels of absence overall, whilst recognising some successes.

Decision

The Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee noted the contents of the report.

The Committee requested that the measurement protocol for assessing attendance levels for teaching staff be referred to the Audit Committee.

(Ref: Report by Executive Director of Customer Services dated 29 May 2014, submitted)

Douglas Cowan left the meeting during discussion of the above item.

8. PERFORMANCE REVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE DEVELOPMENT DAY

The Committee were advised that CIPFA would be attending the development day in order to carry out training to the Committee on how they should best scrutinise the Council. The Committee noted that a series of dates had been identified in late August in which they would be available to come and provide the training. The actual date would be advised to Members in due course.

The Executive Director of Customer Services confirmed that other Councils were being contacted to access their approach to Performance Review and Scrutiny and determine whether the Committee could usefully visit another authority to learn from their experience. The results of this initiative would be reported to the next meeting of the Committee.

Decision

The Committee agreed the proposed schedule for the development day and noted that any suggestions on how the day could be improved would be welcomed.

(Ref: Report by Executive Director of Customer Services dated 29 May 2014, submitted)

9. LOCAL GOVERNEMENT BENCHMARKING FRAMEWORK

The Committee considered a report which advised on the development of the Local Government Benchmarking Framework. The Committee noted that national level statistics can often reflect badly on Argyll and Bute

Council due to the small population sample that gets asked.

Decision

The Committee noted the contents of the report and agreed to adopt the proposed quarterly reporting framework as set out in paragraph 3.6 on the basis that the Committee follows the guidance of Officers when looking at data that could be affected by the size of Argyll and Bute's population.

(Ref: Report by Executive Director of Customer Services dated 29 May 2014, submitted)

10. NEW SCORECARD STRUCTURE

The Committee considered a report which advised the Committee of changes in the layout of the scorecards as a result of Improvement and HR transferring from the Chief Executive's Unit to Customer Services. This change reinforces the Chief Executive's increased focus on strategic matters and reduces the need for the Chief Executive to report performance at both Departmental and Council Levels.

Decision

The Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee noted that SMT had agreed that performance reporting is conducted through the Council Scorecard supported by three Departmental scorecards and that performance reporting for Strategic Finance will be reported in the overall Council Scorecard.

(Ref: Report by Chief Executive, dated 29 May 2014, submitted)

11. PERFORMANCE REPORT - FQ4 2013-2014

The Committee considered the Council and Departmental performance reports with associated scorecards for Q4 2013-2014.

The scorecards were introduced by the Executive Directors who highlighted the key successes as well as the key challenges and the actions being done to address these challenges. The members of the Committee were invited to ask the officers questions on the Performance Reports.

The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, congratulated the Officers from Community Services who have been recognised at a national level.

The Executive Director for Community Services agreed to provide further information to the Committee on the removal of traditional open fire places within RSL properties and the impact on fuel poverty.

In a response to a query on the inclusion of litigation taken out against the Council being recorded in Pyramid, the Head of Governance and Law advised that at this time they are not recorded in Pyramid however he agreed to look into whether it would be beneficial to record this information.

The Executive Director of Customer services agreed to provide further information on the safeguards in place to deter Council Tax fraud in relation to declaration of empty homes.

Decision

The Committee noted the Departmental and Council Scorecards.

(Ref: Report by Chief Executive dated 29 May 2014, submitted)

12. CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME PROGRESS

The Committee considered a report which provided an update on the progress of the Corporate Improvement Programme.

Decision

The Committee noted the contents of the report and requested that further details on the timescales of each of the projects that are being undertaken as part of the Corporate Improvement Programme Progress be provided at a future meeting.

(Ref: Report by Executive Director of Customer Services dated 29 May 2014, submitted)

13. ARGYLL AND BUTE ADP - UPDATE REPORT

The Committee considered a report, presented by the Executive Director of Community Services on his role as Chair of the Argyll and Bute ADP, which provided information on the existing governance arrangements for the Argyll and Bute ADP. The report provided an update on the progress of the Argyll and Bute ADP to offer assurance that the priorities in relation to addiction services as laid out within the Single Outcome Agreement and associated delivery plans are on track.

Decision

The Committee noted the update provided on the Argyll and Bute ADP.

(Ref: Report by Executive Director of Community Services dated 29 May 2014, submitted)