

**MINUTES of MEETING of AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held BY MICROSOFT TEAMS
on TUESDAY, 14 DECEMBER 2021**

Present: Martin Caldwell (Chair)

Councillor Jim Findlay	Councillor Alan Reid
Councillor George Freeman	Councillor Richard Trail
Councillor Jim Lynch	Councillor Andrew Vennard
Councillor Sir Jamie McGrigor	

Attending: Jane Fowler, Head of Customer Support Services
Laurence Slavin, Interim Head of Financial Services
Shona Barton, Committee Manager
Moira Weatherstone, Interim Chief Internal Auditor
Sonya Thomas, Performance and Improvement Officer
John Cornett, Director, Audit Scotland
Kyle McAulay, Senior Audit Manager, Audit Scotland

The Chair moved and the Committee agreed to vary the order of business to facilitate the commitments of officers in attendance. This minute reflects the order in which discussion took place.

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1. APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

There were no apologies for absence intimated.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest intimated.

3. MINUTES

(a) Minute of meeting held on 14 September 2021

The minute of the meeting, held on 14 September 2021, was approved as a correct record.

(b) Minute of Special Meeting held on Wednesday, 24 November 2021

The minute of the Special meeting, held on 24 November 2021, was approved as a correct record.

4. INTERNAL AUDIT AND COUNTER FRAUD SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES

The Committee gave consideration to a report providing a summary of Internal Audit activity and progress during quarter three of 2021/22 against the following areas:

Audits Completed

- Child Protective Services

- Contract Management Roads and Infrastructure Services
- Fixed Asset Register
- Oban Airport
- Street Cleaning
- HSCP – Care Programme Approach

Audits in Progress

- Civil Contingencies
- Environmental Health
- Live Argyll – Budget Monitoring
- Purchase Cards
- School Funds
- Workforce Planning – HSCP

The report also included information on the work carried out by the Counter Fraud Team (CFT) since 14 September 2021 and provided an update on total billing to date as a direct consequence of their work.

Decision

The Audit and Scrutiny Committee agreed to note and endorse the Summary of Activities report.

(Reference: Report by Interim Chief Internal Auditor, dated 14 December 2021, submitted)

5. 2020/21 ANNUAL AUDIT REPORT

Consideration was given to the 2020/21 Annual Audit Report which was provided by Audit Scotland. The report provided information on their findings in relation to the 2020/21 annual accounts; financial management; financial sustainability; governance and transparency and best value. The report also included an assessment of the arrangements in place to ensure that findings from national reports are reviewed and actions are identified to ensure good practice.

Discussion was had in relation to Covid-19 expenditure in both a national and local context, with it being noted that Audit Scotland plan to undertake a piece of work around the national position, which will be published in the Spring of 2022.

Decision

The Audit and Scrutiny Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

(Reference: Report by Audit Scotland, submitted)

Having indicated that this would be his last meeting of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee, the Interim Head of Financial Services took the opportunity to thank colleagues from Audit Scotland for the support they have provided over the last two years. Mr Cornett from Audit Scotland thanked Mr Slavin for his kind words and wished him well for the future.

6. INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORT FOLLOW UP 2021-22

Consideration was given to a report providing an update on all open actions as at 30 September 2021 including information on actions where the agreed implementation date had been rescheduled.

Decision

The Audit and Scrutiny Committee agreed to endorse the contents of the report.

(Reference: Report by Interim Chief Internal Auditor, dated 14 December 2021, submitted)

7. INTERNAL AUDIT REPORTS TO AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2020/2021

The Audit and Scrutiny Committee gave consideration to a report containing the action plans in relation to the following 6 audits:-

- Child Protective Services
- Contract Management: Roads and Infrastructure Services
- Fixed Asset Register
- Oban Airport
- Street Cleaning
- HSCP – Care Programme Approach

Discussion was had in relation to the limited level of assurance of the Contract Management: Roads and Infrastructure audit, and in particular the timescales involved in the delivery of the actions outlined within the action plan. Members noted that the Head of Roads and Infrastructure Services had provided verbal assurance to the Interim Chief Internal Auditor that arrangements had been put in place to ensure that actions are addressed swiftly. It was also noted that consideration would be given to a follow up audit on contract management to be included in a future audit plan. Members also expressed their concern over the timescale for delivery of the high priority actions to improve control and governance, as outlined within the HSCP audit report on the Care Programme Approach, which had been submitted for information.

Decision

The Audit and Scrutiny Committee agreed to note and endorse the summary report and detail within each individual report.

(Reference: Report by Interim Chief Internal Auditor, dated 14 December 2021, submitted)

8. VERBAL UPDATE BY CHAIR(S) OF SCRUTINY PANEL

Martin Caldwell, the Chair of the Community Asset Transfer Review Panel provided a short update in relation to the progress of the review. He advised that having noted that issues had been raised as part of the Best Value review, the Panel had undertaken a useful session with Audit Scotland and were in the process of pulling together the conclusion of the review, and hoped to be in a position to present it to the Committee at their next meeting in March 2022.

Councillor Lynch, Chair of the Fly Tipping Review Panel provided a short update in relation to the progress of the review. He advised that to date only one meeting of the

Panel had taken place and that it had not been possible for Councillor Freeman to attend the meeting. Councillor Lynch requested that Internal Audit forward a note of this meeting to Councillor Freeman and undertook to schedule a further meeting as soon as possible, with an update to be provided to the Committee meeting in March 2022.

Decision

The Audit and Scrutiny Committee agreed to note the contents of the verbal updated by the Chairs of the Scrutiny Panels.

9. COUNCIL 6-MONTH PERFORMANCE REPORT - APRIL TO SEPTEMBER 2021

The Committee gave consideration to a report presenting the Council's 6-month Performance Report and Scorecard for April to September 2021. Information was also provided on planned activity for Performance Management and Reporting during 2021/22 onwards.

Discussion took place around the statistics provided in relation to street lighting faults; the information held in relation to covid related staff absences; the health and wellbeing of staff while working from home and the information provided in relation to school meals.

Decision

The Audit and Scrutiny Committee:-

1. reviewed the Council 6-month Performance Report and Scorecard as presented for the purposes of scrutinising the Council's performance;
2. noted that due to Covid-19 demands on staff and resources, Performance Management was deprioritised; and
3. noted the planned activity for Performance Management and Reporting during 2021/22 onwards.

(Reference: Report by Chief Executive, dated 14 December 2021, submitted)

10. AUDIT AND SCRUTINY WORKPLAN

In order to facilitate forward planning of reports to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee, Members considered the outline Audit and Scrutiny workplan.

Decision

The Audit and Scrutiny Committee agreed to note the outline workplan.

(Reference: Audit and Scrutiny workplan, dated 14 December 2021, submitted)