

**MINUTES of MEETING of PERFORMANCE REVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held in the
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, KILMORY, LOCHGILPHEAD
on THURSDAY, 28 MAY 2015**

Present: Ian M M Ross (Chair)

Councillor Gordon Blair	Councillor John McAlpine
Councillor Maurice Corry	Councillor Sandy Taylor
Councillor Anne Horn	Douglas Cowan
Councillor Iain Angus MacDonald	

Attending: Douglas Hendry, Executive Director – Customer Services
Charles Reppke, Head of Governance and Law
Cleland Sneddon, Executive Director – Community Services
Angus Gilmour, Head of Planning and Regulatory Services
Fergus Murray, Head of Economic Development & Strategic Transport
Jim Smith, Head of Roads and Amenity Services
Jane Fowler, Head of Improvement and HR
Peter Cupples, Finance Manager
Superintendent Gail McClymont, Police Scotland
Chief Inspector Marlene Baillie, Police Scotland
Graham Houston, Scottish Police Authority
John Beresford, Scottish Police Authority
David Clements, Programme Manager
Seona Laird, Customer Services
Shona Barton, Area Committee Manager
Helen MacLeod, Community Services

The Chair welcomed Superintendent Gail McClymont, Police Scotland and Graham Houston, Scottish Police Authority to the meeting.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Jim Hymas, Scottish Fire and Rescue.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee held on 26 February 2015 were approved as a correct record.

4. SCRUTINY OF POLICE SCOTLAND

Superintendent Gail McClymont updated the Committee on the changes to personnel within the local division. Chief Superintendent Grant Manders would replace Chief Superintendent Helen Swann as Local Police Commander after her retirement, and Chief Inspector Paul Robertson replaced Chief Inspector Gary Stitt as a local Area Commander.

Consultations on a potential merger of K and L Divisions were ongoing and any comments or feedback on this was welcomed. It was confirmed that Dumbarton Police station would remain as the operational police hub for the time being, but that other Police Scotland properties were subject to an on-going review. Members concern at any potential closure of Dumbarton Police station was noted.

An Advisory Group had been established to draw up a code of practice and identify legal requirements in relation to "Stop and Search". This was no longer a Key Performance Indicator, although the development of a new database would enable figures to be included in future scrutiny reports.

The report detailed statistics on;

- Road Safety & Road Crime
- Violence, Disorder & Antisocial Behaviour
- Public Protection
- Major Crime and Counter Terrorism; and
- Acquisitive Crime

It was noted that;

- drink/drive offences had reduced nationally following the new limit introduced in December 2014, and agreed that a breakdown of local figures relating to offences would be included in future reports to the Committee;
- under Anti-Social Legislation Housing Associations could only request background information on specific tenants once they were in the property. The Police Community Safety Lead Officers Group was to look at improving the processes relating to anti-social behaviour of tenants with the involvement of the local authority and ACHA;
- long term operations were in place to identify and disrupt the source of drug supply in the area;
- there was no reduction in the number of officers in Argyll and Bute, and that additional officers had been seconded for the summer months for busy tourist areas;
- the number of special constables recruited locally in Argyll and Bute would be included in future reports to the Committee;
- an annual update would be provided to the Committee on the national performance of Argyll and Bute.

Discussion then took place on the amount of saving that Police Scotland had to make in the coming years and that it was the only force in the UK which paid VAT.

Decision

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

(Reference: Report by Local Police Commander dated 21 April 2015, submitted)

Councillor Maurice Corry entered the meeting at 10.10 a.m.

5. SCRUTINY OF SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE

The Committee considered a report submitted by James Hymas, Local Senior Officer, Scottish Fire and Rescue, which provided an update to the Committee on the performance of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service in the Argyll and Bute area from April 2014 – March 2015 inclusively.

Decision

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

(Reference: Report by Local Senior Officer, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service dated May 2015, submitted)

6. ANNUAL TREASURY REPORT 2014 - 15

A report setting out the Council's Treasury Management Position for 2014 – 15 was considered.

It was noted that the report would be submitted to the Council on 25 June 2015 and that there may be some minor changes to the final report to reflect any matters arising in completing the Councils unaudited accounts.

Decision

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

(Reference: Report by Interim Head of Strategic Finance dated 13 May 2015, submitted)

7. PERFORMANCE REPORT FQ4 2014 - 15

The Committee considered the Council and Departmental performance reports with associated scorecards for performance in FQ4 2014 – 15 (January – March 2015).

Members noted the position of each scorecard and that the new Local Development Plan had been formally adopted by Council on 26 March 2015. It was considered that local communities were being affected by the lack of housebuilding on land held by developers and that this should begin to be addressed and alternative land for development identified in advance of the next Local Development Plan.

Decision

The Committee reviewed the reports and scorecards as presented, and noted the contents thereof.

(Reference: Report by the Chief Executive dated 28 May 2015, submitted)

8. LOCAL GOVERNMENT BENCHMARKING FRAMEWORK (LGBF)

As part of the agreement by the Committee to review the Local Government Benchmarking Framework in four sections over a year, the Committee considered the fourth section giving consideration to trends over the first four years of the LGBF, including an overview of our Family Group ranking.

Decision

The Committee noted the contents of the report and encouraged the officers to maintain their efforts to ensure the measurement criteria applied in the process was relevant to Argyll and Bute.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Customer Services dated 28 May 2015, submitted)

9. 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 progress made in delivering the Corporate Improvement Programme.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Customer Services dated 28 May 2015)

10. MAXIMISING ATTENDANCE: COUNCIL PERFORMANCE 2014 - 2015

The Council considered a report which provided an update on the Council's performance on Maximising Attendance during the period April 2014 – March 2015.

Decision

The Committee noted;

- (i) the contents of the report; and
- (ii) the ongoing actions being taken to tackle and reduce absence.

Councillor Michael Breslin asked the Chair if he could have the opportunity to ask questions on this item. The Chair ruled that he would not be allowed to speak.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Customer Services dated 28 May 2015, submitted)

11. CASTLE TOWARD - SCRUTINY REPORT

The Committee considered a report which had been agreed at the Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee (PRS) held on 26 February 2015 to be brought forward to support the Committee in ensuring effective oversight and scrutiny of the Council decision making process in relation to the sale of Castle Toward.

The report outlined the background in relation to the sale of Castle Toward and the process that had been adopted by the Council progressing decisions in this regard.

The PRS Committee had delegated powers in terms of the Scheme of Administration, and its terms of reference included responsibility for scrutiny in relation to commenting on decisions and policies agreed by the Council and other committees and the impact they had on Argyll and Bute as an area. In this regard the Chair advised that he had written to Members of the Committee asking for their input on key areas for scrutiny and as a consequence 6 areas had been identified for discussion as set out in the report.

The Chair outlined that there was a need for the Committee to consider the integrity and the interpretation of the information of the various decisions relating to Castle Toward, and detailed discussion on each element then took place.

As the consideration of the Committee concluded the Chair invited the local member Councillor Michael Breslin to contribute to the discussion on this item.

Councillor Breslin thanked the Chair for the opportunity to speak, although not a member of the Committee. Councillor Breslin indicated that he was satisfied that the issue had been properly interrogated and supported the requested involvement of internal audit in assessing the protocols for capital planning.

Decision

The Committee;

- (i) noted the chronology in respect of decisions relating to Castle Toward;
- (ii) noted the reasons for oscillation between the Policy and Resources Committee and Council in respect of decision making; and
- (iii) agreed that in light of the discussions held at the meeting, that the Chair prepare a report on the issues discussed . This report would be submitted to the next meeting of the PRS Committee for consideration and determination.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Customer Services dated 18 May 2015, submitted)

Councillor Maurice Corry left the meeting at this point.

12. PERFORMANCE REVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

The Committee considered the outline work plan to facilitate forward planning of reports to the Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee.

The Committee was informed that a specific training session for Members on scrutiny and run by an exemplary external organisation was being arranged to take place after the summer recess. This would assist the ongoing development and training of the PRS Committee.

Decision

The Committee noted the Workplan and that an Item on Castle Toward be added to the agenda of the next PRS Committee being held on Thursday 27 August 2015.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Customer Services dated 28 May 2015, submitted)

The Chair reminded Members that he had indicated when he took on the role that he had advised that if he ever received information that he thought the Committee should know about he would advise them.

He informed the meeting that Councillor Michael Breslin had written to him, as Chair of the Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee, the Chair of the Audit Committee and Internal Audit querying the Constitutional process for the appointment of Members to the Service Choices Project Board as agreed at a Special Meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 2 April 2015. He would be responding indicating that he saw no issue with the arrangements that had been put in place.