

PERFORMANCE AND REVIEW SCRUTINY FORUM

Minutes of meeting held via Microsoft Teams on 8 December 2020

Chair:

Councillor Maureen Chalmers

Councillors Present:

Councillor Alex Allison, Councillor Robert Brown, Councillor Stephanie Callaghan (*substitute for Councillor John Ross*), Councillor Gerry Convery, Councillor Peter Craig, Councillor Maureen Devlin, Councillor Joe Fagan, Councillor Katy Loudon, Councillor Jared Wark

Councillor's Apology:

Councillor John Ross (Chair)

Attending:

Chief Executive's Service

C Sneddon, Chief Executive

Community and Enterprise Resources

S Clelland, Head of Fleet and Environmental Services; P Elliott, Head of Planning and Economic Development; C Park, Engineering Manager; A McKinnon, Head of Facilities, Waste and Grounds Services

Education Resources

D Dickson, Education Operations Manager

Finance and Corporate Resources

P Manning, Executive Director; T Little, Head of Communications and Strategy; S McLeod, Administration Officer; N Reid, Improvement and Community Planning Manager; L Wyllie, Administration Assistant

Housing and Technical Resources

L Hayes, Performance and Support Adviser

Social Work Resources

L Purdie, Head of Children and Justice Services

Also Attending:

South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture Limited (SLLC)

D Booth, General Manager

Appointment of Chair

In terms of Standing Order No 32(b), Councillor Chalmers was appointed Chair for this meeting.

1 Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

2 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of the Performance and Review Scrutiny Forum held on 29 September 2020 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

The Forum decided: that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

3 Council Plan 'Connect' 2017 to 2022 – Quarter 2 Progress Report 2020/2021

A report dated 12 November 2020 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on the progress of 'Connect', the Council Plan 2017 to 2022, at the Quarter 2 Stage of 2020/2021.

'Connect' detailed the Council's vision, values, ambitions and objectives to be delivered in the 5 year period of the Plan. Progress made on key objectives was summarised in the report. Of the 98 measures nominated for reporting against the Plan in 2020/2021:-

- ◆ 0 projects had been completed
- ◆ 64 had met their timescale or target as per expectations
- ◆ 11 had minor slippage against timescale or minor shortfall against target
- ◆ 1 had major slippage against timescale or major shortfall against target
- ◆ 22 were contextual or would be reported on at a later stage

The 'Connect' Performance Report for Quarter 2, 2020/2021, covering the period to the end of September 2020, was attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

To aid scrutiny, additional analysis of the measures that had been identified as 'contextual' or 'report later' in the Quarter 4 Progress Report 2019/2020, considered by the Forum at its meeting on 29 September 2020, had been undertaken. Of the 15 measures which had been identified as 'contextual' or 'report later':-

- ◆ figures for the 6 'contextual' measures had been provided in the previous report to the Forum
- ◆ 3 had been 'report later' as they were Local Government Benchmarking Framework indicators, for which the results would not be published until February 2021
- ◆ an update on the status and an explanatory narrative in relation to the remaining 6 'report later' measures were provided in Appendix 2 to the report

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council had been forced to suspend or reduce a number of services that could not be continued in full due to government advice, including adhering to physical distancing requirements for service users and employees. The Council had also been obliged to redirect resources so that it could deliver vital new services and supports for individuals, communities and businesses and there had been an inevitable impact on performance in some areas.

The Education Operations Manager responded to a member's question regarding the rollout of the 1140 hours expansion and another member asked that her thanks, to everyone involved in overcoming the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic in opening the Millburn Early Learning and Childcare facility on 7 December 2020, be recorded.

The Forum decided:

- (1) that the 'Connect' Quarter 2 Progress Report 2020/2021, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, be noted;
- (2) that the progress and key achievements made in terms of the reporting measures contained in Connect, as detailed in the report, be noted; and
- (3) that the additional scrutiny of the updated status of those measures identified as 'report later' in the 'Connect' Quarter 2 Progress Report 2019/2020, as detailed at Appendix 2 to the report, be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 18 June 2019 (Paragraph 3)]

4 Self-Assessment and Improvement Activity Annual Update 2019/2020

A report dated 4 November 2020 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted providing a summary of the information contained within the Audit Scotland Report entitled 'Local Government in Scotland: Overview 2020'.

Audit Scotland published an overview report each year on behalf of the Accounts Commission, covering key areas of current and future activity relative to local government and providing an opinion on how those were, or should be, managed.

The report had been produced prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and had been issued after careful consideration as, although the environment in which councils operated had changed dramatically, the Accounts Commission believed that the report contained important messages that would be helpful as part of the recovery.

The report, which could be accessed on the Audit Scotland website, was divided into the following 3 parts:-

- ◆ Part 1 The challenges
- ◆ Part 2 Doing things differently
- ◆ Part 3 Service case study

A number of key messages arising from the report were outlined, including recommendations for councils. Details of the recommendations were provided, together with an assessment of the position for this Council.

In response to a member's question in relation to the implications on service delivery if local government funding continued to be reduced, the Chief Executive stated that:-

- ◆ Audit Scotland had begun to recognise that stresses were appearing in local government due to the financial challenges being faced and acknowledged that there had been a change in local government performance as a result of the budget reductions implemented during the previous 12 years
- ◆ if the Council was unable to maintain all of its services to an appropriate standard, it would be faced with increasingly difficult decisions in terms of addressing priorities and allocating resources to the areas that would have the greatest effect in terms of Council policies and would need to consider service delivery in terms of what was statutory and non-statutory and where resources needed to be allocated

The Forum decided: that the key messages and recommendations contained in the Audit Scotland Report entitled 'Local Government in Scotland: Overview 2020' be noted.

[Reference: Minutes of 18 June 2019 (Paragraph 5)]

5 Dundee City Council and Aberdeenshire Council Best Value Assurance Reports (BVARs) Published by the Accounts Commission

A report dated 4 November 2020 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on Best Value Assurance Reports (BVARs) that had been published by the Accounts Commission since the previous meeting of the Forum.

The report provided details of the key themes and recommendations included in the BVARs in relation to the following councils:-

- ◆ Dundee City Council – published on 29 September 2020

- ◆ Aberdeenshire Council – published on 22 October 2020

The Forum decided: that the report be noted.

6 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.