

# PERFORMANCE AND REVIEW SCRUTINY FORUM

Minutes of meeting held via Microsoft Teams on 26 October 2021

## **Chair:**

Councillor John Ross

## **Councillors Present:**

Councillor Alex Allison, Councillor Robert Brown, Councillor Maureen Chalmers, Councillor Gerry Convery, Councillor Peter Craig, Councillor Joe Fagan, Councillor Eileen Logan (*substitute for Councillor Maureen Devlin*), Councillor Katy Loudon

## **Councillors' Apologies:**

Councillor Maureen Devlin, Councillor Jared Wark

## **Attending:**

### **Chief Executive's Service**

C Sneddon, Chief Executive

### **Community and Enterprise Resources**

G Simpson, Development Adviser

### **Finance and Corporate Resources**

P Manning, Executive Director; T Little, Head of Communications and Strategy; S McLeod, Administration Officer; K McVeigh, Head of Personnel Services; L Marshall, Finance Adviser; A Norris, Administration Assistant; N Reid, Improvement and Community Planning Manager; B Teaz, Head of Information Technology

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## **1 Declaration of Interests**

No interests were declared.

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## **2 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting of the Performance and Review Scrutiny Forum held on 17 August 2021 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

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

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## **3 Local Government Benchmarking Framework Update**

A report dated 20 September 2021 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted providing an update on engagement with the Local Government Improvement Service (LGIS) and the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) Board regarding development of the Council's use of the Benchmarking Framework.

A number of issues regarding the LGBF had been raised by members at previous meetings of the Forum and were summarised in the report. In view of those issues, officers had met with the Chair of the LGBF Board and the LGBF Project Manager of the LGIS and, as a result, the Council would work with the LGIS to review how it used the LGBF, particularly to refine the selection of indicators to better reflect the Council's priorities within the context of service improvement and to support scrutiny of progress in priority areas.

Several topics of further potential work with the LGIS had also been explored, details of which were provided in the report. This work would be progressed with the LGIS, linking in with the engagement and deliberative processes involved in the new Council Plan and Community Plan, paving the way for a new approach to LGBF analysis and reporting for the next round of LGBF data, due for publication in early 2022.

An update on the work being undertaken with the LGIS, including recommendations for the reporting of the next round of LGBF, would be reported to the Forum at its meeting in January 2022.

Officers responded to members' questions on various aspects of the report.

**The Forum decided:**

- (1) that the engagement with the Local Government Improvement Service and the Local Government Benchmarking Framework Board in relation to the LGBF be noted;
- (2) that the further work to be undertaken on the Council's use of the LGBF, as detailed in the report, be noted; and
- (3) that it be noted that an update on the work in relation to the Council's use of the LGBF would be submitted to the Forum in January 2022.

*[Reference: Minutes of 18 May 2021 (Paragraphs 3 and 4)]*

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#### **4 Audit Scotland Report – Local Government in Scotland Overview 2021**

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A report dated 18 October 2021 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 2021'.

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 noted that the COVID-19 pandemic had created unprecedented issues and challenges for councils, their partners and communities. It further noted that the shape of the recovery, renewal curve and the longer-term impacts on the economy, communities and public services were not yet clear.

The Overview 2021 report was the first in a series of reports that would reflect on the evolving and long-term nature of the impact of COVID-19 and considered the initial responses of councils. Future reporting would provide a more detailed analysis of the impact and lessons learned from the pandemic.

The Overview 2021 report, which could be accessed on the Audit Scotland website, considered the impact of the pandemic across the following 3 themes:-

- ◆ communities and people
- ◆ service delivery and partnership working
- ◆ service case study focusing on planning

A number of key messages and lessons learned were detailed in the Overview 2021 report and summarised in the report to the Forum.

Officers responded to members' questions on various aspects of the report.

**The Forum decided:** that the key messages and recommendations contained in the Audit Scotland Report entitled 'Local Government in Scotland: Overview 2021' be noted.

*[Reference: Minutes of 8 December 2020 (Paragraph 4)]*

*Councillor Craig joined the meeting during this item of business*

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## **5 East Dunbartonshire Council Best Value Assurance Report (BVAR) Published by the Accounts Commission**

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A report dated 29 September 2021 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on the Best Value Assurance Report (BVAR) 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 BVAR in relation to East Dunbartonshire Council which had been published on 29 September 2021.

**The Forum decided:** that the report be noted.

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## **6 Urgent Business**

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There were no items of urgent business.