



Council Offices, Almada Street  
Hamilton, ML3 0AA

Tuesday, 23 November 2021

Dear Councillor

## **South Lanarkshire Council**

The Members listed below are requested to attend a meeting of the Council to be held as follows:-

**Date: Wednesday, 01 December 2021**  
**Time: 11:30 (or immediately following the Executive Committee, whichever is the later)**  
**Venue: By Microsoft Teams,**

The business to be considered at the meeting is listed overleaf.

Yours sincerely

**Cleland Sneddon**  
**Chief Executive**

### **Members**

Alex Allison, John Anderson, John Bradley, Walter Brogan, Robert Brown, Archie Buchanan, Jackie Burns, Janine Calikes, Stephanie Callaghan, Graeme Campbell, Andy Carmichael, Maureen Chalmers, Gerry Convery, Margaret Cooper, Poppy Corbett, Margaret Cowie, Peter Craig, Maureen Devlin, Mary Donnelly, Isobel Dorman, Fiona Dryburgh, Joe Fagan, Allan Falconer, Grant Ferguson, Alistair Fulton, Geri Gray, George Greenshields, Lynsey Hamilton, Ian Harrow, Eric Holford, Graeme Horne, Mark Horsham, Martin Grant Hose, Ann Le Blond, Martin Lennon, Richard Lockhart, Eileen Logan, Katy Loudon, Joe Lowe, Hugh Macdonald, Julia Marrs, Monique McAdams, Ian McAllan, Catherine McClymont, Kenny McCreary, Colin McGavigan, Mark McGeever, Jim McGuigan, Davie McLachlan, Gladys Miller, Lynne Nailon, Richard Nelson, Carol Nugent, Mo Razzaq, John Ross, Graham Scott, David Shearer, Collette Stevenson, Bert Thomson, Margaret B Walker, Jim Wardhaugh, Jared Wark, David Watson, Josh Wilson

## BUSINESS

- 1 **Declaration of Interests**
- 2 **Minutes of Previous Meeting** 3 - 14  
Minutes of the meeting of South Lanarkshire Council held on 22 September 2021 submitted for approval as a correct record. (Copy attached)
- 3 **Minutes of Risk and Audit Scrutiny Committee** 15 - 20  
Minutes of the Risk and Audit Scrutiny Committee held on 22 June 2021 submitted for noting. (Copy attached)
- 4 **Minutes of Risk and Audit Scrutiny Committee** 21 - 28  
Minutes of the Risk and Audit Scrutiny Committee held on 15 September 2021 submitted for noting. (Copy attached)

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### Item(s) for Decision

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- 5 **Notice of Motion - Challenges Faced by Young People During Covid-19 Pandemic – Concerns Over Waiting Lists to See Specialists** 29 - 30  
Motion received in terms of Standing Order No 19 on 12 November 2021, proposed by Councillor Nelson and seconded by Councillor Holford. (Copy attached)

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### Item(s) for Noting

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- 6 **External Auditor's Annual Report to South Lanarkshire Council** 31 - 32  
Report dated 17 November 2021 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources). (Copy attached)

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### Urgent Business

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- 7 **Urgent Business**  
Any other items of business which the Provost decides are urgent.

***For further information, please contact:-***

Clerk Name:	Susan Somerville
Clerk Telephone:	01698 454197
Clerk Email:	susan.somerville@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Minutes of meeting held via Microsoft Teams on 22 September 2021

**Chair:**

Provost Ian McAllan

**Councillors Present:**

Councillor Alex Allison, Councillor John Anderson, Councillor Walter Brogan, Councillor Robert Brown, Councillor Archie Buchanan, Councillor Jackie Burns, Councillor Janine Calikes, Councillor Andy Carmichael, Councillor Maureen Chalmers, Councillor Gerry Convery, Councillor Poppy Corbett, Councillor Margaret Cowie, Councillor Peter Craig, Councillor Maureen Devlin, Councillor Mary Donnelly, Councillor Isobel Dorman, Councillor Fiona Dryburgh, Councillor Joe Fagan, Councillor Allan Falconer, Councillor Grant Ferguson, Councillor Alistair Fulton, Councillor Geri Gray, Councillor Lynsey Hamilton, Councillor Ian Harrow, Councillor Eric Holford, Councillor Graeme Horne, Councillor Mark Horsham, Councillor Martin Grant Hose, Councillor Ann Le Blond, Councillor Martin Lennon, Councillor Eileen Logan, Councillor Katy Loudon, Councillor Joe Lowe, Councillor Hugh Macdonald, Councillor Julia Marrs, Councillor Monique McAdams, Councillor Catherine McClymont, Councillor Colin McGavigan, Councillor Mark McGeever, Councillor Jim McGuigan, Councillor Davie McLachlan, Councillor Gladys Miller, Councillor Lynne Nailon, Councillor Carol Nugent, Councillor Mo Razaq, Councillor John Ross, Councillor Graham Scott, Councillor David Shearer, Councillor Bert Thomson, Councillor Margaret B Walker, Councillor Jim Wardhaugh, Councillor Jared Wark, Councillor David Watson, Councillor Josh Wilson

**Councillors' Apologies:**

Councillor John Bradley, Councillor Stephanie Callaghan, Councillor Graeme Campbell, Councillor Margaret Cooper, Councillor George Greenshields, Councillor Richard Lockhart, Councillor Kenny McCreary, Councillor Richard Nelson, Councillor Collette Stevenson

**Attending:**

**Chief Executive's Service**

C Sneddon, Chief Executive

**Community and Enterprise Resources**

M McGlynn, Executive Director

**Education Resources**

T McDaid, Executive Director; L Sherry, Head of Education (Support Services and School Estates)

**Finance and Corporate Resources**

P Manning, Executive Director; N Docherty, Administration Assistant; G McCann, Head of Administration and Legal Services; K McVeigh, Head of Personnel Services; S Somerville, Administration Manager

**Housing and Technical Resources**

D Lowe, Executive Director

**Social Work Resources/Health and Social Care**

S Sengupta, Director, Health and Social Care

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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 South Lanarkshire Council held on 23 June 2021 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

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

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### **3 Minutes of Risk and Audit Scrutiny Committee**

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The minutes of the meeting of the Risk and Audit Scrutiny Committee held on 3 March 2021 were submitted for noting.

**The Council decided:** that the minutes be noted.

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### **4 Depute Provost Vacancy**

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A report dated 10 August 2021 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on options available in respect of the vacant position of Depute Provost.

At the meeting of the Council held on 23 June 2021, Councillor Stevenson advised that it would be her last Council meeting in her capacity as Depute Provost.

The options available to the Council were:-

- ◆ given that there were only 2 scheduled full Council meetings before the end of the current Council term and the cost to the public purse, the position remain unfilled
- ◆ that nominations be sought to fill the vacancy

**The Council decided:** that the position of Depute Provost remain unfilled for the remainder of this Council term.

*[Reference: Minutes of 23 June 2021 (Paragraph 8)]*

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### **5a Recommendations Referred by Executive Committee - Prudential Indicators, Treasury Management Activity and Annual Investment Report 2020/2021**

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A report dated 22 September 2021 by the Chief Executive was tabled on the recommendation which had been referred to the Council by the Executive Committee of 22 September 2021 in relation to the Council's Annual Investment Report 2020/2021. The recommendation was that the Council's Annual Investment Report 2020/2021 be approved.

**The Council decided:** that the recommendation of the Executive Committee of 22 September 2021 in relation to the Council's Annual Investment Report 2020/2021 be approved.

*[Reference: Minutes of the Executive Committee of 22 September 2021 (Paragraph 6)]*

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### **5b Recommendation Referred by Executive Committee - Standing Orders on Contracts - Amendments in Relation to Use of Quick Quote**

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A report dated 22 September 2021 by the Chief Executive was tabled on the recommendation which had been referred to the Council by the Executive Committee of 22 September 2021 in relation to proposed revisions to the Council's Standing Orders on Contracts in relation to the use of the quick quote process. The recommendation was that the following revisions to the Council's Standing Orders on Contracts be approved:-

- ◆ an increase in the current limit for procuring works contracts using the quick quote process from £50,000 to £2million to allow for quicker and more simplified procurement exercises and to give greater scope to award higher value contracts locally

- ◆ an increase in the requirement to seek quotes from local small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) – 4 (previously 2) from 5, if such SMEs were available, to give greater scope to award more contracts locally

**The Council decided:** that the recommendation of the Executive Committee of 22 September 2021 in relation to proposed revisions to the Council’s Standing Orders on Contracts in relation to the use of the quick quote process, as outlined above, be approved.

*[Reference: Minutes of the Executive Committee of 22 September 2021 (Paragraph 9)]*

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## **6 Equity Working Group Progress Report**

A report dated 7 September 2021 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted providing an update on the work of the Equity Working Group.

At its meeting held on 23 September 2020, the Council agreed to the establishment of a cross-party Equity Working Group that was tasked to:-

- ◆ consider the officers’ report on recruitment disparities between white and Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) applicants
- ◆ investigate and identify any sources of inequity
- ◆ develop consensus on effective ways to address any sources of inequity
- ◆ recommend measures to ensure equitable treatment to Council

To date, the Group had:-

- ◆ gained an understanding of the Council’s recruitment process and discussed what could be done differently to encourage BAME applicants
- ◆ considered a report from officers on the recruitment of BAME candidates to the Council
- ◆ examined feedback from the BAME recruitment survey and discussed next steps
- ◆ agreed questions for use at focus groups for respondents of the BAME survey and examined feedback resulting from those focus groups
- ◆ requested a review of equalities training for all Council employees and elected members and noted the new proposals that would be referred to the Corporate Management Team for discussion and for consultation with representative groups, including trades unions
- ◆ been made aware of the developments in race equality in employment

There were parallels between the work of the Equal Opportunities Forum and the Equity Working Group and it was proposed that, to enable the Forum to continue the remit of the Working Group, consideration be given by the Council at its statutory meeting in May 2022 to the membership and Terms of Reference of the Equal Opportunities Forum.

As there was some further work for the Equity Working Group to examine, it was proposed that it continue to meet during the final cycle of meetings in this Council term until those actions were completed.

Councillor Razzaq, Chair of the Equity Working Group, referred to the basis for establishing the Working Group and wished to thank both officers and councillors for their input.

Councillors Donnelly, Thomson, McGeever, Holford and McAdams, in turn, were heard in support of the work of both the Equity Working Group and the Equal Opportunities Forum to achieve equity for all.

**The Council decided:**

- (1) that the work undertaken by the Equity Working Group be noted;
- (2) that consideration be given by the Council at its statutory meeting in May 2022 to increase the membership of the Equal Opportunities Forum to allow representation by all political groups within the Council and to expand its Terms of Reference to allow the Forum to continue the work of the Equity Working Group;
- (3) that feedback from the Equity Working Group focus groups be used to review the current recruitment policy;
- (4) that mandatory equalities training be introduced for elected members and officers; and
- (5) that the Equity Working Group continue to meet into the final cycle of committee meetings ending 2 March 2022 to allow the group to undertake the remaining tasks, as outlined in paragraph 6.1.

*[Reference: Minutes of 23 September 2020 (Paragraph 11)]*

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## **7 Notice of Motion – Parking Permits**

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In terms of Standing Order No 19, a motion proposed by Councillor Convery, seconded by Councillor Fagan, was submitted as follows:-

“The Council is asked to agree that:-

The charge for administering residential parking schemes approved on the 24 February 2021 is removed.

Residents are reimbursed for residential parking permits charges introduced as a consequence of the approval of saving CER24 on 24 February 2021.

The cost of removing the charge in this financial year be met from Resource underspend or use of Reserves.

We call on our Colleagues to end this unfair tax on our Constituents.”

In moving his motion, Councillor Convery referred to the context of parking permits being introduced in the late 1990s due to traffic volume in East Kilbride town centre and the resulting impact on residential areas. He referred to parking charges and wished to move the motion on behalf of his constituents as he considered they were being penalised as a consequence of where they lived. Councillor Fagan seconded the motion.

Councillor Wardhaugh, seconded by Councillor Watson, moved the following as an amendment:-

Replace the existing text of the motion with the following:

“We consider that the Residents’ Parking Permit Scheme in East Kilbride is unfair and no longer necessary due to the reduction of retail activity and the reduction of people working in the town centre.

We propose that the existing scheme be discontinued from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022.”

Councillor Anderson, seconded by Councillor Craig, moved the following as a second amendment:-

Delete: after "24th February 2021"

Insert: is maintained, subject to the following conditions;

Council asks that a consultation of all residents in existing and future parking permit zone areas is be carried out as to whether they;

a) Wish to remain in a parking permit zone area and pay the £5/year (less than 10p/wk) administration charge,

or

b) Have their areas parking permit zone removed.

Council asks that the consultation to be completed within three months and by the end of January at the latest, and that a report is brought forward by officers to the first appropriate committee on its completion.

Council further asks that this report provides further information on climate change, sustainability and environmental implications of each and any possible options going forward.

Councillor Allison considered that, as the matter was about the residents in the area, it would be best to consult with them and report back to the Area Committee. Councillors Anderson and Craig confirmed their acceptance to add to their amendment that the outcome of the consultation would be reported back to all Area Committees as it impacted on all of South Lanarkshire, not just East Kilbride. In response to a question from Councillor Watson in relation to the decision-making forum for this matter, the Head of Administration and Legal Services clarified that the decision-making forum would be the Council, however, the Area Committees could receive the outcome of particular consultations relating to their area and express their views to feed into the parent committee, Community and Enterprise Resources Committee, to allow it to determine whether or not to endorse and refer on to the Council for decision-making.

In response to a Point of Order by Councillor McAdams, the Provost reiterated that members should raise any issues via him as Chair.

On a vote being taken by roll call, between the second amendment (moved by Councillor Anderson, seconded by Councillor Craig) and the first amendment (moved by Councillor Wardhaugh, seconded by Councillor Watson), members voted as follows:-

#### **First Amendment**

Jackie Burns, Jim Wardhaugh, David Watson

#### **Second Amendment**

Alex Allison, John Anderson, Robert Brown, Archie Buchanan, Janine Calikes, Maureen Chalmers, Poppy Corbett, Peter Craig, Mary Donnelly, Isobel Dorman, Fiona Dryburgh, Grant Ferguson, Alistair Fulton, Geri Gray, Ian Harrow, Eric Holford, Graeme Horne, Mark Horsham, Martin Grant Hose, Ann Le Blond, Katy Loudon, Hugh Macdonald, Julia Marrs, Ian McAllan, Colin McGavigan, Mark McGeever, Jim McGuigan, Gladys Miller, Lynne Nailon, Carol Nugent, John Ross, David Shearer, Jared Wark, Josh Wilson

### **Abstained**

Walter Brogan, Andy Carmichael, Gerry Convery, Margaret Cowie, Maureen Devlin, Joe Fagan, Allan Falconer, Lynsey Hamilton, Martin Lennon, Eileen Logan, Joe Lowe, Monique McAdams, Catherine McClymont, Davie McLachlan, Mo Razzaq, Graham Scott, Bert Thomson, Margaret B Walker

3 members voted for the first amendment, 34 for the second amendment and 18 abstained. The second amendment was declared carried and placed against the motion.

On a vote being taken by roll call, members voted as follows:-

### **Motion**

Walter Brogan, Jackie Burns, Andy Carmichael, Gerry Convery, Margaret Cowie, Maureen Devlin, Joe Fagan, Allan Falconer, Lynsey Hamilton, Martin Lennon, Eileen Logan, Monique McAdams, Catherine McClymont, Davie McLachlan, Mo Razzaq, Graham Scott, Bert Thomson, Margaret B Walker

### **Amendment**

Alex Allison, John Anderson, Robert Brown, Archie Buchanan, Janine Calikes, Maureen Chalmers, Poppy Corbett, Peter Craig, Mary Donnelly, Isobel Dorman, Fiona Dryburgh, Grant Ferguson, Alistair Fulton, Geri Gray, Ian Harrow, Eric Holford, Graeme Horne, Mark Horsham, Martin Grant Hose, Ann Le Blond, Katy Loudon, Hugh Macdonald, Julia Marrs, Ian McAllan, Colin McGavigan, Mark McGeever, Jim McGuigan, Gladys Miller, Lynne Nailon, Carol Nugent, John Ross, David Shearer, Jim Wardhaugh, Jared Wark, David Watson, Josh Wilson

### **Abstained**

Joe Lowe

36 members voted for the amendment, 18 for the motion and 1 abstained. The amendment was declared carried.

### **The Council decided:**

- (1) that the charge for administering residential parking schemes approved on 24 February 2021 be maintained, subject to the following conditions:-
  - ◆ that a consultation of all residents in existing and future parking permit zone areas be carried out as to whether they:-
    - ◆ wished to remain in a parking permit zone area and pay the £5 per year (less than 10p per week) administration charge; or
    - ◆ wished to have their area's parking permit zone removed
- (2) that the consultation be completed within 3 months and by the end of January 2022 at the latest; and
- (3) that a report be submitted on the outcome of the consultation to Area Committees so that views could be fed back via a further report, which should also include information on climate change, sustainability and environmental implications of any possible options going forward, to the Community and Enterprise Resources Committee.

In response to a Point of Order by Councillor Convery, the Head of Administration and Legal Services clarified the terms of the amendment by Councillor Anderson did not seek to suspend parking charges.

*In terms of Standing Order No 13, the Provost adjourned the meeting at 1.08pm following consideration of this item of business. The meeting reconvened at 1.15pm without the attendance of Councillors Burns, Carmichael, Hose and Razzaq*

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## 8 Notice of Motion – ‘Teach the Future Scotland’ and the Place of the Climate Challenge in Education

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In terms of Standing Order No 19, a motion proposed by Councillor Brown, seconded by Councillor McGeever, was submitted as follows:-

“The Council notes the continuing climate emergency, the efforts, both local and national, being undertaken to tackle this and the welcome focus on the issue with the forthcoming UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow from 31 October to 12 November 2021.

The Council welcomes the positive work of ‘Teach the Future Scotland’, led by young people in schools and further education, to ensure that the climate emergency is high on the education agenda. Teach the Future has noted that only 4% of students feel they know a lot about climate change, 68% of students want to learn more about the environment and 75% of teachers feel they have not received adequate training to educate students about climate change.

Council supports the call by Teach the Future Scotland for the Scottish Government to commission a review into how the Scottish education system is preparing students for the climate emergency and ecological crisis and asks the Chief Executive to write to the Scottish Education Secretary in support of this.

The Council further:-

1. commits to reviewing how education in South Lanarkshire prepares students to help tackle the climate change crisis and deliver climate justice, and to develop this in consultation with a panel of school students
2. notes the need to look at continuous professional development within the Council in order that teachers are equipped and confident to teach understanding of climate change issues
3. calls for a paper on Climate Change education to be brought to the Education Resources Committee in the near future, detailing what action is currently being taken.”

In moving his motion, Councillor Brown referred to the forthcoming COP26 conference in Glasgow and the importance of tackling climate change challenges, given the acceleration of its impact, as shown in recent news events. He referred to discussions he had had with local young people involved in the ‘Teach the Future Scotland’ campaign and how the Council should build on the work already undertaken so that South Lanarkshire was an exemplar in keeping young people informed with the relevant knowledge to influence decisions which would affect their futures. Councillor McGeever seconded the motion.

Councillor Loudon, seconded by Councillor Marrs, moved the following as an amendment:-

**Delete after “climate emergency is high on the education agenda”**

**Insert;**

Teach the Future has collated and cited various studies – UK-wide, England-only, and European-wide – which show that the majority of young people want to learn more about sustainability and expressed a desire to have young voices listened to on climate change, while teachers expressed a desire for more training to educate students about climate change.

Council recognises the partnership work between Keep Scotland Beautiful, YouthLink Scotland, Young Scot, and the Scottish Government to deliver the official COP26 Youth Climate Programme, which will run during the lead up to and beyond the UN conference in November, and will include a range of online and in-person activities aimed at increasing young people's awareness of climate change.

Council supports the ethos behind the Teach the Future Scotland campaign, and asks the Chief Executive to write to the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, given recent Government announcements in this area, to ask for an update on any evaluations as to how the education system is preparing students for the climate emergency and ecological crisis, and on any support that is available to local government to support this aim.  
Council further;

Calls for an update in the near future on the paper presented to the Climate Change and Sustainability committee (dated 5th January 2021, presented by the Executive Director of Education Resources) on current and future sustainability activity, to detail new developments that have taken place since this time.

Asks that this update includes details of the progress made towards developing a forum for young people to further the sustainability and climate change agenda, as previously presented to the Climate Change and Sustainability committee.

Asks that this update gives further details of Continuous Professional Development opportunities and learning and teaching resources available to staff both within the Council, and via other fora such as the West Partnership or other partnership organisations.

In moving her amendment, Councillor Loudon intimated that she hoped this would be accepted by Councillor Brown as it sought to contextualise and strengthen the motion and was in the spirit of working together on crucial issues.

Councillor Allison, seconded by Councillor Nailon, moved as a second amendment that the matter be referred to the Climate Change and Sustainability Committee for consideration.

Councillor Brown accepted the terms of Councillor Loudon's amendment.

Councillor Allison, with the agreement of Councillor Nailon, withdrew his amendment.

**The Council decided:** that the motion, as amended, be agreed.

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## **9 Covid-19 Recovery Arrangements and Service Reintroduction**

A report dated 8 September 2021 by the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources) was submitted on the actions that had been taken to date in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and those being planned and implemented with regards to service re-introduction.

Details were provided on the Council's initial response to the pandemic and plans to aid service recovery. Despite the many challenges faced, Council services, in partnership with South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture (SLLC), community planning partners and community groups and individuals, continued to deliver essential services alongside a range of new services that were needed to support residents and communities.

To support the delivery of those services, there was a need to, in many cases, adapt working practices and service delivery models and develop revised Safe Systems of Work. When developing and implementing revised working arrangements, regular consultation took place with the trades unions.

One of the most significant areas of need identified to maintain service delivery, was to enable as many Council staff to work from home as possible. The findings from employee surveys issued in relation to working from home highlighted that employees had a positive experience of the adapted working arrangements and of the supports put in place in terms of engagement, communication and equipment.

On 15 July 2021, a Service Re-introduction toolkit was issued to managers and employees to help to continue to support the workforce as part of the Council's COVID-19 recovery process. Services were being re-introduced in ways which considered service user priorities and took account of the advances in technology that had been made with the aim of improving:-

- ◆ accessibility for customers/service users
- ◆ service delivery
- ◆ efficiency and effectiveness of services
- ◆ employee health and wellbeing
- ◆ energy efficiency and reducing carbon outputs

The current status of service delivery across all Resources was detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.

It was envisaged that, in many cases, future working models would include an element of agile working. An outcome of the introduction of more agile ways of working would lead to a reduction in floorspace and fleet provision. Also, through the roll-out of IT enhancements, there was now an opportunity to rationalise the Council's telephony requirements.

Resources would continue to re-introduce services, however, it was highlighted that progress might be affected by:-

- ◆ any rise in COVID-19 infection levels, leading to increased absence or self-isolation across the workforce or affecting service users and thereby preventing service delivery
- ◆ general seasonal absence trends over autumn/winter
- ◆ workforce recruitment to fill vacancies
- ◆ ongoing restrictions, eg vehicle usage
- ◆ supporting wider community vaccination and testing programmes
- ◆ potential industrial action
- ◆ availability of materials and supplies and price increases

The Chief Executive spoke on the key challenges and thanked elected members for their support in helping to explain the challenges to their constituents. He referred to Lanarkshire having the highest number of COVID-19 cases recorded in recent weeks and the huge pressure on NHS Services and the health and social care system. This, in turn, also impacted on other services, such as housing and Money Matters. He wished to recognise the work of staff, partner agencies, third sector colleagues and the proactive approach by trades unions in assisting to take forward safely the work of the Council.

The Leader thanked Executive Directors and their staff, as well as SLLC colleagues, for their commitment in maintaining services for the benefit of communities.

In response to a question from Councillor Watson on communication and call handling response times, the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) advised that data from the customer contact centre was monitored and undertook to address any specific issues following receipt of further information.

Councillor Walker referred to the fundamental shift in how services were now provided, via telephone/online rather than face to face, which, she acknowledged, had been driven by necessity. She referred, in particular, to Social Work services and requested that working practices be kept under review with a view to, in certain circumstances, restoring face to face services in order to provide the best quality for service users. In concluding, she asked for more information on the staff survey in terms of challenges faced by staff and requested that impact assessments be undertaken in relation to service users for areas that were being reviewed.

The Provost welcomed Soumen Sengupta, Director, Health and Social Care to his first meeting of the Council and invited him to respond to some of Councillor Walker's comments. In response, he welcomed the points raised by Councillor Walker, however, cautioned that, based on the current figures, South Lanarkshire was going into its 4<sup>th</sup> wave of the pandemic. He said the paper outlined where the Service was currently at in terms of getting the right balance between providing services where possible, while also dealing with unprecedented levels of demands. He thanked members for their support and asked for their continued help with public messaging. He also encouraged members' input on service provision going forward and acknowledged that things needed to be done differently. He considered how that would be achieved was a conversation for elected members, the wider community, staff and trades unions to engage in. He concluded by thanking everyone for their support and advising that if members had particular questions in terms of specific services, then he was happy to deal with direct.

Councillor McAdams highlighted that while officers might be resuming site visits, elected members had been refused. She also referred to overspends, which had been reported through the Financial Resources Scrutiny Forum, in relation to utility costs in schools and nurseries due to increased ventilation and considered that this would require to be addressed in the long-term, given climate change and financial challenges.

Councillor Fagan stated that he had been made aware of concerns from families in relation to Day Care Centres, especially for adults with learning disabilities. He referred to the Day Care Centre review and the current requirement to operate a temporary model due to the pandemic. He advised that he did not want this to be perceived as the future model as he considered it did not necessarily meet the level of care that the Council had previously assessed for some individuals. He also referred to a preference for complex enquiries being addressed face to face as opposed to by phone or email. In response to Councillor Fagan's question on recruitment, the Chief Executive advised that there was a constant cycle of recruitment and there was no policy to hold posts. He said a priority for the Council was recruitment for the Care at Home sector, however, acknowledged that it was an ongoing challenge. He also referred to the challenges of the re-emerging economy and rates of pay in certain sectors which exceeded some in the care sector and how nationally it was hoped to address this issue. As some of the examples referred to by Councillor Fagan were within SLLC, the Chief Executive undertook to speak to the General Manager, SLLC and ask that he respond direct to Councillor Fagan.

The Provost concluded by recording his thanks for the hard work and efforts of Council staff over the past 18 months.

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

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## 10 Questions – Breakfast Clubs

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In terms of Standing Order No 18(a), the following questions were submitted from Councillor Brown:-

- ◆ whether the Council was still committed to providing a breakfast club in every school
- ◆ how many schools did not currently have a functioning breakfast club
- ◆ whether there continued to be staffing issues

- ◆ when would there be a full complement of breakfast clubs available to all children who wanted them in every school

A copy of the response to the questions by the Executive Director (Education Resources) was attached as Item 10(b).

In response to a Point of Order by Councillor Brown, the Head of Administration and Legal Services confirmed that the Council had to operate in accordance with the current Standing Orders on Procedures which prohibited any discussion or debate on questions brought under Standing Order No 18(a). She advised that the Standards and Procedures Advisory Forum was taking the lead on a full review of Standing Orders and procedural arrangements, and members would be consulted as part of that. The outcome of the review would be presented to the new Council at its statutory meeting in May 2022.

**The Council decided:** to note the contents.

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## **11 Questions – Play Parks**

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In terms of Standing Order No 18(a), the following questions were submitted from Councillor Brown:-

- ◆ how many play parks were maintained or managed by South Lanarkshire Council
- ◆ how much Scottish Government funding did the Council expect to receive as a result of the SNP's manifesto pledge to spend £60 million to refurbish all play parks
- ◆ how many play parks would that sum pay to refurbish

A copy of the response to the questions by the Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources) was attached as Item 11(b).

**The Council decided:** to note the contents.

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## **12 Urgent Business**

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There were no items of urgent business.



## RISK AND AUDIT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of meeting held via Microsoft Teams on 22 June 2021

**Chair:**

Councillor Jared Wark

**Councillors Present:**

Councillor Mary Donnelly, Councillor Grant Ferguson, Councillor Julia Marrs, Councillor Davie McLachlan, Councillor Carol Nugent

**Councillor Also Present:**

Councillor John Ross

**Councillors' Apologies:**

Councillor Walter Brogan, Councillor Graeme Campbell, Councillor Martin Lennon

**Attending:**

**Chief Executive's Service**

C Sneddon, Chief Executive (for items 3 and 4)

**Finance and Corporate Resources**

P Manning, Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources); Y Douglas, Audit and Compliance Manager; G McCann, Head of Administration and Legal Services; E-A McGonigle, Administration Officer; J Taylor, Head of Finance (Strategy)

**Also Attending:**

**Audit Scotland**

A Kerr, External Auditor

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### Appointment of Chair

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

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### 1 Declaration of Interests

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No interests were declared.

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### 2 Minutes of Previous Meeting

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The minutes of the meeting of the Risk and Audit Scrutiny Committee held on 3 March 2021 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

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

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### 3 Internal Audit Annual Assurance Report 2020/2021

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A report dated 4 June 2021 by the Audit and Compliance Manager (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted providing:-

- ◆ a summary of progress and performance of Internal Audit for the financial year 2020/2021

- ◆ an opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's framework of governance, risk management and control systems based on audit work undertaken in 2020/2021

Details were given on:-

- ◆ Internal Audit performance
- ◆ Council-wide performance in relation to the delivery of audit actions
- ◆ workload analysis
- ◆ links to the Council's objectives and top risks
- ◆ management of fraud risks
- ◆ areas of assurance
- ◆ areas of external reliance

During 2020/2021, the Council's systems and controls had been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and there was a requirement to amend governance arrangements and normal business operations in response to the unprecedented circumstances. Guidance issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), which advised that audit processes could be streamlined to increase capacity, audit scopes could be narrowed to examine key risks and advisory work that supported the annual opinion could be prioritised, was adopted by the Council to ensure the annual audit opinion for the year ended 31 March 2021 could be provided.

The overall opinion expressed on the Council's control environment was that a reasonable level of assurance could be placed on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's framework of governance, risk management and control arrangements for the year ended 31 March 2021. The Internal Audit findings would inform the Council's 2020/2021 Governance Statement.

**The Committee decided:**

- (1) that the performance of Internal Audit during 2020/2021 be noted;
- (2) that the level of assurance on the Council's control environment be noted; and
- (3) that it be noted that the overall findings from Internal Audit work would inform the Council's 2020/2021 Annual Governance Statement.

*[Reference: Minutes of 18 June 2020 (Paragraph 3)]*

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#### **4 Annual Governance Statement for 2020/2021 and Significant Governance Areas Quarter 4 Progress Report**

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A report dated 26 May 2021 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on the Annual Governance Statement for 2020/2021 and progress against significant governance areas identified within the 2019/2020 Annual Governance Statement at Quarter 4.

Each year, the Council undertook a review of the governance arrangements required to support its financial and operational controls. This review provided the basis for the Annual Governance Statement which was included in the Council's Annual Report and Statement of Accounts.

The Council's governance assurance framework was detailed in Appendix 1 to the report. The resulting Annual Governance Statement for 2020/2021, attached as Appendix 2 to the report, provided information on the Council's compliance during 2020/2021. The annual review of governance arrangements across the Council demonstrated sufficient evidence that the principles of delivering good governance in local government, contained in the Local Code of Corporate Governance, operated effectively and that the Council complied with its Code.

Progress on the significant governance areas highlighted within the Annual Governance Statement 2019/2020 was attached as Appendix 3 to the report.

In response to a member's question, an officer advised that cyber resilience training was available for all staff and elected members to access via Learn on Line.

**The Committee decided:**

- (1) that the Annual Governance Statement, attached as Appendix 2 to the report, which would be included in the 2020/2021 Annual Report and Statement of Accounts, be approved; and
- (2) that the progress on the Good Governance Statement Action Plan at Quarter 4 2019/2020, detailed in Appendix 3 to the report, be noted.

*[Reference: Minutes of 18 June 2020 (Paragraph 4)]*

*Councillor Ross left the meeting after consideration of this item of business*

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## **5 Unaudited Annual Accounts 2020/2021**

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A report dated 2 June 2021 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on the requirement for members to consider the Unaudited Annual Accounts of the Council and related Charitable Trusts, attached as Appendices 1 and 3 to the report, by 30 June 2021.

The Council's Unaudited Annual Accounts detailed key information on the Council's expenditure and income for the financial year ended 31 March 2021. The accounts also covered 3 Charitable Trusts managed by the Council, namely South Lanarkshire Council Educational Trust, South Lanarkshire Council Charitable Trust and the East Kilbride Information Technology Trust.

Due to the ongoing impact of COVID-19, the Scottish Government had extended the normal audit deadline to beyond 30 June, however, the Council had chosen to complete the Unaudited Accounts submission by that date. The full unaudited accounts would be circulated to members following their submission to the auditor on 30 June 2021 and would be advertised as being available for public inspection on the Council's website from that date.

Due to the ongoing impact of COVID-19, the Scottish Government had extended the normal audit deadline from 30 September to 30 November 2021 and the audited Annual Accounts would be submitted to this Committee on 17 November 2021, together with the External Auditor Members' report for formal approval and signature.

A monitoring report on the final outturn position of the Council's Revenue Budget, attached as Appendix 2 to the report, would be presented to the Executive Committee on 23 June 2021. The information contained in the unaudited Accounts took into account the position reported in the Revenue Outturn report and was, therefore, subject to the approval of the Executive Committee.

The CIPFA Code of Accounting Practice (the Code) introduced an Expenditure and Funding Analysis which must be prepared as part of the main Accounts. Appendix 2 to the report provided a reconciliation of the final breakeven position, which would be reported to the Executive Committee on 23 June 2021, to the figures included in the Council's Accounts 2021 (in the Expenditure and Funding Analysis Statement and the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Account) in line with the Code.

Councillor Marrs made reference to other key achievements she considered should be highlighted in Appendix 1 to the report. In response, the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) confirmed that those would be included in the final version of the accounts.

In response to a question in relation to indemnity insurance for members involved with Charitable Trusts, Officers undertook to provide clarification to members on this matter.

**The Committee decided:** that the unaudited Annual Accounts of the Council and related Charitable Trusts, to be submitted to Audit Scotland by the deadline of 30 June 2021, be noted.

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## 6 Internal Audit Activity as at 4 June 2021

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A report dated 4 June 2021 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on work completed by Internal Audit during the period 13 February to 4 June 2021.

Findings from internal audit assignments were reported to the Committee throughout the year and the last progress report was considered by this Committee on 3 March 2021. Performance indicators had not been reported to the Committee for most of 2020/2021 as traditional monitoring processes were not able to accurately capture data relating to the delivery of COVID-19 tasks alongside routine audit work. Annual performance data as at 31 March 2021 was gathered for the purpose of the annual assurance report and was summarised in Appendix 1 with explanations.

As at 31 March 2021, 88% of planned assignments were at final draft stage. During 2020/2021, 94% of draft reports were issued on time and 75% within budget against targets of 80% respectively. Quality continued to be monitored through internal quality control procedures.

Client contributions to the delivery of the audit plan took the form of responding to draft reports, agreeing to close meetings and signing reports timeously once agreed. In 2020/2021, 94% of audit assignments were concluded to a signed action plan within 4 weeks of the issue of a draft report against a target of 80%.

The findings from assignments completed in the period 13 February to 4 June 2021 were detailed in Appendix 2 to the report.

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

*[Reference: Minutes of 3 March 2021 (Paragraph 4)]*

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## 7 Interim Management Report 2020/2021

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An interim audit report dated May 2021 by Audit Scotland, the Council's external auditor, was submitted detailing the findings of Audit Scotland's interim audit of the Council for 2020/2021.

The external auditor detailed key findings in relation to the following areas of audit work:-

- ◆ payroll validation
- ◆ approval of journal entries

The management responses in relation to the external auditor's findings on each of those areas of work were detailed in the report.

The external auditor also advised of other audit work and discussions undertaken in relation to grant claim certification work.

The ongoing impact of COVID-19 was recognised and Audit Scotland concluded it was no longer viable to continue to view 2020/2021 as a transitional audit year and that the later deadline set for 2019/2020 of 30 November remained appropriate for the Annual Audit Plan this year.

**The Committee decided:** that the external auditor's interim audit report for 2020/2021 be noted.

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## **8 Financial Resources Scrutiny Forum Activity**

A report dated 25 May 2021 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on reports considered by the Financial Resources Scrutiny Forum in the period from August 2020 to May 2021.

A report on the business considered by the Financial Resources Scrutiny Forum would continue to be submitted to the Risk and Audit Scrutiny Committee on an annual basis.

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

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## **9 Forward Programme for Future Meetings**

A report dated 26 May 2021 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on the outline forward programme for the meeting of the Risk and Audit Scrutiny Committee to 26 January 2022.

As part of future arrangements, members were invited to suggest topics for inclusion in the Committee's forward programme.

**The Committee decided:** that the outline forward programme for the meetings of the Risk and Audit Scrutiny Committee to 26 January 2022 be noted.

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## **10 Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.



## RISK AND AUDIT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of meeting held via Microsoft Teams on 15 September 2021

**Chair:**

Councillor Eric Holford

**Councillors Present:**

Councillor Mary Donnelly, Councillor Julia Marrs, Councillor Davie McLachlan, Councillor Carol Nugent

**Councillor Also Present:**

Councillor Jim Wardhaugh

**Councillors' Apologies:**

Councillor Walter Brogan, Councillor Graeme Campbell, Councillor Grant Ferguson, Councillor Martin Lennon

**Attending:**

**Finance and Corporate Resources**

P Manning, Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources); Y Douglas, Audit and Compliance Manager; S Dunsmore, Insurance and Risk Manager, E-A McGonigle, Administration Officer; J Taylor, Head of Finance (Strategy), B Teaz, Head of IT Services

**Also Attending:**

**Audit Scotland**

G McNally, External Auditor

### 1 Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

### 2 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of the Risk and Audit Scrutiny Committee held on 22 June 2021 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

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

### 3 Internal Audit Activity as at 27 August 2021

A report dated 30 August 2021 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on work completed by Internal Audit during the period 5 June to 27 August 2021.

Findings from internal audit assignments were reported to the Committee throughout the year and the last progress report was considered by this Committee on 22 June 2021. Key performance indicators, which reflected quality, on time and within budget for the period to 30 June 2021, were summarised at Appendix 1 to the report. 100% of draft reports were issued on time and 100% within budget against targets of 80% respectively. Quality continued to be monitored through internal quality control procedures.

Much of the focus for the first quarter of the year had been the preparation of annual assurance reports for the Council and the 4 external clients to which the Council provided an internal audit service, in conjunction with supporting Council Services to disburse COVID-19 grants. Those tasks had exceeded the original estimated days to complete and this had impacted on progress with other assignments that were anticipated to be concluded in the first 6 months of the year. Work to complete the first phase of the 2021/2022 Audit Plan continued and a full update, together with a proposed Plan for the remainder of the year, would be presented to the next meeting.

The findings from assignments completed in the period 5 June to 27 August 2021 were detailed in Appendix 2 to the report.

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

*[Reference: Minutes of 22 June 2021 (Paragraph 6)]*

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#### **4 Year End Risk Management Report 2020/2021 and Review of Council's Top Risks 2021/2022**

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A report dated 16 August 2021 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted providing an update on:-

- ◆ progress with risk management activity undertaken during 2020/2021
- ◆ the Council's top risk register following the review and consultation process

In 2020/2021, a mid-year review of the Council's 'very high' scored risks was undertaken to ensure that those risks continued to be managed appropriately, given their significance. The only change of note at this time, was a reduction in the risk score on the 'Social Work Care Inspectorate Requirements' risk. Details of further amendments to this risk were provided in Appendix 3 to the report.

An informal benchmarking exercise was undertaken to review the Council's top risks against a neighbouring authority's risk register. This review established that the current South Lanarkshire Council's top risk register was, in the main, reflective of the risks faced by the neighbouring authority. The intention was to expand this exercise further with additional local authorities for the 2022/2023 review.

Risk Sponsors were required on an annual basis to assess their Resource's compliance with the Risk Management Strategy and provide supporting evidence. The information for 2020/2021 was summarised in the end of year compliance statement which was detailed in Appendix 1 to the report. Resources continued to demonstrate full compliance with the Strategy, having scored 45 out of 45. The revised 5x5 risk scoring matrix was attached as Appendix 2 to the report.

The annual review, in line with previous years, did not result in wholesale changes to the top risk register. The risks from the previous year's review, as detailed in the report to this Committee on 9 December 2020, were still deemed to be valid, however, the majority of those risks had been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Details were given on the main changes to the Council's top risk register as follows, with further details provided in Appendix 3 to the report:-

- ◆ the residual risk score for 'COVID-19 pandemic' had reduced from 20 to 16
- ◆ a new risk had been added, 'The Council was materially affected by the recommendations arising from the independent review of Adult Social Care in Scotland'
- ◆ the residual risk score for 'EU Exit' had reduced from 20 to 12

- ◆ the risk 'Failure to evidence progress against Social Work Care Inspectorate Requirements' was no longer considered to be a Council top risk and had been removed following the acknowledgement by the Care Inspectorate of improvements made in the Hamilton and Rutherglen service areas
- ◆ the risk card for 'Potential liability arising from claims of historic abuse' had been re-written to reflect upon recent developments and changes to legislation
- ◆ the risk 'Failure to adequately prepare for the national expansion in early years' education and child care provision' was no longer considered to be a Council top risk and had been removed
- ◆ the risk 'Failure to maintain the required pupil/teacher ratio' was no longer considered to be a Council top risk and had been removed
- ◆ the risk description for 'Death or injury to employees, service users or members of the public affected by Council operations' had been amended to capture wider health, safety and wellbeing issues
- ◆ risk descriptions, controls and actions had been updated, as required, on individual risks, following discussion with risk owners

The Council's top risk register was monitored on an ongoing basis and updates were reported annually to this Committee. Risk scores and rankings would be amended if new information came to light that allowed the position to be reassessed. The top risk register for 2021 was attached as Appendix 4 to the report.

Horizon scanning was used to identify several areas that could pose potential threats and risks or emerging issues and opportunities that could affect the Council. Full details were provided at Appendix 5 to the report and those areas would continue to be monitored.

**The Committee decided:**

- (1) that the Resource compliance with the requirements of the Risk Management Strategy be noted;
- (2) that progress being made in delivering actions to mitigate top Council risks be noted; and
- (3) that the updated Council top risks be noted.

*[Reference: Minutes of 9 December 2020 (Paragraph 6)]*

**5 2020/2021 Year End Insured Risks Report**

A report dated 16 August 2021 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on the Council's insurance claims for the year to 31 March 2021 for the following main classes of insurance:-

- ◆ employer's liability
- ◆ public liability
- ◆ motor insurance
- ◆ property insurance and other miscellaneous risks

Appendix 1 to the report provided annual comparisons of the numbers and values of claims by Resources for the years 2016/2017 to 2020/2021. The comparison showed an overall downward trend in the number of claims. Claims costs had fluctuated over the last 5 years with 2020/2021 showing the lowest number of claims received during this period.

Appendix 2 to the report compared claim numbers and costs for 2020/2021, at 31 March 2021, with the equivalent position for 2019/2020. This showed a reduction of 228 claims (22.9%) on the numbers reported in 2019/2020 and an increase in the cost of claims from £1.947 million in 2019/2020 to £2.010 million in 2020/2021.

Information was provided on:-

- ◆ measures in place and mitigating actions proposed to manage insurance hotspots
- ◆ claim highlights for the year
- ◆ positive risk management activity aimed at reducing the number and cost of claims

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

**The Committee decided:**

- (1) that the Insured Risks Report for the year ended 31 March 2021 be noted; and
- (2) that ongoing work to identify and mitigate insurance hotspots be noted.

*[Reference: Minutes of 21 September 2020 (Paragraph 5)]*

*Councillor Nugent left the meeting during consideration of this item of business due to technical difficulties*

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## **6 2020/2021 National Fraud Initiative Exercise**

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A report dated 30 August 2021 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on the 2020/2021 National Fraud Initiative (NFI) exercise.

The NFI matched similar data across public sector systems and identified possible inconsistencies. Those inconsistencies, known as matches, required to be investigated by participating public bodies with a view to detecting fraud. The full exercise continued to be undertaken every 2 years. This data was matched to other benefits and payroll data as well as Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) deceased persons' records and the Electoral Register.

A full NFI exercise had been undertaken in 2020/2021 and involved Council wide comparisons including:-

- |                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| ◆ housing benefits             | ◆ blue badge holders   |
| ◆ Council Tax Reduction Scheme | ◆ procurement  |
| ◆ payroll                      | ◆ creditors  |
| ◆ housing tenants              | ◆ Council tax single discount  |
| ◆ waiting lists                | ◆ Small business grant fund (SBGF) and retail, hospitality and leisure grants (RHLG) |

For the 10 match areas, 4 categories had a decrease in match numbers, 5 categories had an increase in matches, and one new category was introduced in relation to COVID-19 grant funding.

Details were given on the results of the 2020/2021 exercise which, for the Council, highlighted that:-

- ◆ at 4 June 2021, a total of 17,113 matches had been identified. Of those, it was intended to investigate a total of 9,954 matches
- ◆ the greatest percentage decrease had been in the number of matches relating to Housing Benefit. This decrease was likely to be attributable to the ongoing move to Universal Credit which was now managed by the DWP
- ◆ the greatest percentage increase had been in the number of blue badges matched to DWP deceased persons' records. This might relate to a timing issue from the date the information was provided to NFI and the date matches were carried out

Appendices 1 to 3 to the report provided:-

- ◆ details of the match areas covered in the 2020/2021 exercise
- ◆ a comparison of matches reported to the Committee in 2020
- ◆ a detailed breakdown of the target investigations and outcomes

Due to resources required to respond to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the deadline for investigations was extended to 31 March 2022, however, it was anticipated that the majority of investigations would be completed ahead of this date. Further updates would be reported to the Committee during 2021/2022.

**The Committee decided:** that the results of the matching exercise and target number of investigations be noted.

*[Reference: Minutes of 21 September 2020 (Paragraph 6)]*

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## **7 Fraud Statistics Annual Report 2020/2021**

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A report dated 30 August 2021 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on fraud statistics for the year to 31 March 2021 and comparing those figures with the previous year's statistics.

The number, types, outcomes and costs of fraud investigations, together with performance measures for the year to 31 March 2021, were detailed in the report. A comparison to the statistics for the same period in the previous year was also provided. Those statistics highlighted that:-

- ◆ 26 fraud investigations, with a total value of £45,000, had been reported in the period, representing a decrease in number and in value from the previous year
- ◆ 63% of cases investigated were founded
- ◆ all except one founded case related to benefit fraud or fraud committed by a third party

On conclusion of all internal investigations, an assessment was made on whether improvement actions were necessary. Arising from the fraud investigations during the year to 31 March 2021, an improvement plan with 7 separate actions had been produced.

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

*[Reference: Minutes of 21 September 2020 (Paragraph 8)]*

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## 8 Financial Management Code

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A report dated 10 June 2021 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on the Financial Management (FM) Code and an update on the Council's self-assessment exercise.

The Chartered Institute of Finance and Public Accountancy (CIPFA) introduced the FM Code which provided "guidance for good and sustainable financial management in local authorities. By complying with the principles and standards within the code, authorities would be able to demonstrate their financial sustainability". A key goal of the FM Code was to improve the financial resilience of organisations by embedding enhanced standards of financial management.

2020/2021 was the shadow year of implementing the FM Code and CIPFA had suggested that by 31 March 2021, local authorities should be able to demonstrate that they were working towards full implementation. The first full year of compliance with the FM Code would be 2021/2022.

A review of the FM Code was undertaken and consideration given to the Council's position in relation to it. The principles that informed the FM Code had been designed to focus on an approach that would assist in determining whether, in applying standards of financial management, a local authority was financially sustainable.

Details were provided on the following principles of the FM Code:-

- ◆ organisational leadership
- ◆ accountability
- ◆ financial management
- ◆ adherence to professional standards
- ◆ sources of assurance
- ◆ long-term sustainability of local services

Appendix 1 to the report detailed the Council's position against each of the principles and the response to the self-assessment. Of the 17 criteria in the self-assessment, the Council had fully embedded 14 as part of its normal business by the end of the shadow implementation year 2020/2021. This highlighted that the Council already had a strong approach to financial management and financial resilience, including demonstrating value for money, strong governance and controls and adherence to professional guidance, and approach to financial management and reporting.

In respect of the 3 criteria that were not fully embedded, actions had been developed that would allow for further incorporation and development of the existing financial management controls and measures to provide continued comfort on financial resilience. Those actions would be completed by the end of March 2022 to ensure full compliance at the end of the first full year of implementation.

### **The Committee decided:**

- (1) that the requirements of the Financial Management (FM) Code, detailed in section 4 of the report, be noted; and
- (2) that the Council's position in relation to the shadow year self-assessment, detailed in section 5.4 of the report, be noted.

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## **9 Audit Scotland – Financial Overview 2019/2020**

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A report dated 5 July 2021 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on the Audit Scotland report entitled 'Financial Overview 2019/2020' which had been published in January 2021.

The report had been structured around the following 4 headings:-

- ◆ councils' income in 2019/2020
- ◆ financial position
- ◆ financial outlook
- ◆ Integration Joint Boards' overview 2019/2020

The key messages from the Audit Scotland report were detailed, together with an assessment of the position in South Lanarkshire Council.

### **The Committee decided:**

- (1) that the key messages and recommendations contained in the Audit Scotland report entitled 'Financial Overview 2019/2020', as detailed in sections 4 to 7 of the report, be noted; and
- (2) that the Council's position on those key messages and recommendations, as detailed in section 8 of the report, be noted.

*[Reference: Minutes of 18 June 2020 (Paragraph 9)]*

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## **10 Audit Scotland Report: Digital Progress in Local Government**

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A report dated 30 August 2021 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on a summary of the information contained within the Audit Scotland Report 'Digital Progress in Local Government' published in January 2021.

The use of digital technologies was becoming increasingly commonplace in all aspects of life, including personal, social and in the workplace. A digitally enabled business could deliver both improved services and efficiencies.

Over the past year, digital technologies had enabled councils to continue to deliver services during the COVID-19 pandemic. This was demonstrated by an accelerated rollout of laptops and Office 365/Microsoft Teams which enabled thousands of staff to work effectively from home. Virtual committee meetings had allowed the democratic processes to continue and citizen interaction in many cases had transferred to channels such as email, online forms, phone and videoconferencing.

The pandemic had also highlighted the disadvantages that many citizens experienced through digital exclusion, where they could not access, or benefit from, online services. The reasons for exclusion included poor internet availability, affordability, lack of skills or concerns around online security. The Council's Digital Inclusion Strategy had a programme of work to address those challenges in the Council.

The Digital Inclusion Strategy set out how the Council utilised technology to deliver service and cost benefits. The Strategy was currently being refreshed and would be submitted to a future meeting of this Committee for approval. This would align closely with the Council Plan, Connect and the new Scottish Government national digital strategy published in spring 2021.

Audit Scotland published a report in January 2021, "Digital Progress in Local Government", which looked at how well councils were progressing with digital transformation. Audit Scotland interviewed representatives from several councils, COSLA, the Local Government Digital Office, Scotland Excel and SEEMiS to assess progress.

Information was provided on the key messages arising from the Audit Scotland report including:-

- ◆ impact of COVID-19
- ◆ becoming a digital council
- ◆ citizens at heart
- ◆ workforce and skills
- ◆ data and technology
- ◆ national leadership and collaboration

A summary of the Audit Scotland recommendations for councils, together with an assessment of the position in South Lanarkshire Council, was provided.

**The Committee decided:** that the key messages and recommendations of the Audit Scotland Report 'Digital Progress in Local Government' be noted.

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## 11 Forward Programme for Future Meetings

A report dated 21 July 2021 by the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) was submitted on the outline forward programme for the meetings of the Risk and Audit Scrutiny Committee to 26 January 2022.

As part of future arrangements, members were invited to suggest topics for inclusion in the Committee's forward programme.

**The Committee decided:** that the outline forward programme for the meeting of the Risk and Audit Scrutiny Committee to 26 January 2022 be noted.

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## 12 Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

**Challenges Faced by Young People During Covid-19 Pandemic – Concerns Over Waiting Lists to See Specialists**

**Notice of Motion**

Motion received in terms of Standing Order No 19 on 12 November 2021, proposed by Councillor Richard Nelson, seconded by Councillor Holford, as follows:-

“The Council recognises the challenges faced by our young people during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially those with additional support needs; praises the work undertaken by Lanarkshire Autism Group based in Larkhall and indeed, all organisations who have provided vital support to families during this difficult time; raises serious concerns over the waiting lists for young people to see specialists with waiting lists throughout South Lanarkshire stating the following:

Speech and Language – 42 weeks  
Neuro Development Team – 2 years  
Community Paediatrician – 3 years  
CAMHS – 1+ years

Understands that GIRFEC (getting it right for every child) supports families by making sure children and young people can receive the right help, at the right time, from the right people; however, agrees that this policy cannot assist families properly whilst waiting lists are out of control; further agrees to write to the Minister for Mental Wellbeing and Social Care to note this Council’s serious concerns in relation to the above waiting times and to ask the Scottish Government to outline their plans to urgently reduce these waiting times.”



# Report

6

Report to:	<b>South Lanarkshire Council</b>
Date of Meeting:	<b>1 December 2021</b>
Report by:	<b>Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)</b>

Subject:	<b>External Auditor's Annual Report to South Lanarkshire Council</b>
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## 1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ advise members of the External Auditor's, Audit Scotland, Annual Report to the Council for 2020/2021

## 2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the External Auditor's Annual Report 2020/2021 to the Council be noted.

## 3. Background

3.1. The Risk and Audit Scrutiny Committee considered the External Auditor's Annual Report to the Council at its meeting on Wednesday 17 November 2021.

3.2. A copy of Audit Scotland's letter and report can be accessed at the following links (Agenda Item No 3 of the Risk and Audit Scrutiny Committee refers):-

[External Auditor's Letter](#)  
[External Auditor's Report](#)

## 4. Employee Implications

4.1. None

## 5. Financial Implications

5.1. None

## 6. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

6.1. There are no climate change, sustainability or environmental implications in terms of this report.

## 7. Other Implications

7.1. There are no issues in terms of risk in relation to the content of this report.

## 8. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

8.1. No equality impact assessment or consultation is required in terms of the recommendation contained within this report.

**Paul Manning**  
**Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources)**

17 November 2021

**Link(s) to Council Values/Ambitions/Objectives**

- ◆ Accountable, Effective, Efficient and Transparent

**Previous References**

- ◆ Risk and Audit Scrutiny Committee of 17 November 2021

**List of Background Papers**

- ◆ None

**Contact for Further Information**

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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