

Audit and Scrutiny Committee
31 January 2023

At a Meeting of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 10.00 a.m. involving participation by remote electronic means and physical attendance within the Council Chambers, Irvine.

Present (Physical Participation)

John Bell, Donald Reid, Cameron Inglis, Matthew McLean and John Sweeney.

Present (Remote Participation)

Tom Marshall and Davina McTiernan.

In Attendance (Physical Participation)

A. Sutton, Executive Director (Communities and Education); T. Reaney, Head of Service (Neighbourhood Services) (Place); M. Boyd, Head of Service and L. Miller, Senior Manager (Audit, Fraud, Safety and Risk) (Finance); F. Walker, Head of Service and B. Quigley, Senior Manager (ICT) (People and ICT); and A. Craig, Head of Service and D. McCaw, H. Clancy and S. Wilson, Committee Services Officers (Democratic Services) (Chief Executive's Service).

Also in Attendance (Physical Participation)

Councillor Stewart Ferguson.

Chair

Councillor Bell in the Chair.

Apologies

Eleanor Collier and Ian Murdoch.

1. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest by Members in terms of Standing Order 11 and Section 5 of the Code of Conduct for Councillors.

2. Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Audit and Scrutiny Committee held on 15 November 2022 were confirmed and the Minutes signed in accordance with Paragraph 7 (1) of Schedule 7 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

3. Elected Member Service Requests

Submitted report by the Head of Service (Democratic) on the Elected Member constituent services request/query process and performance for the period 1 April to 30 September 2022. Appendix 1 to the report detailed the process when service requests/queries were received from constituents, including information on Stage One and Stage Two requests, with Appendix 2 detailing the process when constituent complaints were received.

Members asked questions and were provided with further information in relation to:-

- any crossover between service requests and complaints;
- how service requests and complaints should be progressed by Elected Members;
- the ability of Elected Members to contact Heads of Service in relation to any constituent complaint;
- Officer responses advising Elected Members of a service request completion, with the request then being closed off on the EMPro system; and
- the potential for a review of the EMPro system to reflect a two-stage process to reflect closure of an initial request with a subsequent timescale prompt added for completion of any resultant action required.

The Committee agreed (a) to note the terms of the report and information provided; (b) that the Head of Democratic Services bring a report on Elected Member service requests via EMPro to a future meeting to coincide with the annual report on corporate complaints; and (c) that the Head of Democratic Services review the process for dealing with requests from Elected Members to consider the approach required to ensure requests and resultant actions are fully closed off by Services, and provide the Committee with an update in due course.

4. Internal Audit Reports Issued

Submitted report by the Head of Service (Finance) on the findings of Internal Audit work completed between November and December 2022. The findings from five audit assignments were detailed at Appendix 1 to the report, together with the respective executive summaries and action plans.

Members asked questions and were provided with further information in relation to:-

Facilities Management Procurement

- any restrictions on meal choices within schools;
- food waste arising from uncollected schools meals as a result of strike action;
- the provision of grab-and-go meals on strike days;
- unused food being shared with local community centres for distribution; and
- the trialing of a catering van to address picket line concerns.

The Senior Manager (Audit, Fraud, Safety and Risk) undertook to contact Facilities Management for an update on meal choices within schools.

Accounts Payable Transaction Testing Q2

- the detection of duplicate invoices;
- further improvements in terms of suppliers on the system where no bank details were provided; and
- occasions where supplier bank details matched a Council employee's bank details.

Scottish Housing Regulator Annual Assurance Statement

- the updating of the self-assessment toolkit as part of the action points arising

from the audit.

Members asked for further clarification regarding the slow implementation of fire alarm legislation within Council homes and the Senior Manager (Audit, Fraud, Safety and Risk) undertook to request an updated position from the Service.

The Committee agreed to note the outcomes from the Internal Audit work completed as set out in the report and detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.

5. Exclusion of the Public – Para 1

The Committee resolved in terms of Section 50(A)4 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, to exclude from the Meeting the press and the public for the following item of business on the grounds indicated in terms of Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

6. Internal Audit Reports Issued

Submitted report by the Head of Service (Finance) on the findings of an Internal Audit review completed in November 2022.

Noted.

The meeting ended at 10.45 a.m.