

## **ANGUS COUNCIL**

MINUTE of HYBRID MEETING of the **SCRUTINY AND AUDIT COMMITTEE** held in the Town and County Hall, Forfar on Tuesday 3 December 2024 at 2.00pm.

**Present:** Councillors CRAIG FOTHERINGHAM, GAVIN NICOL, KENNY BRAES, JULIE BELL, SERENA COWDY, LYNNE DEVINE, IAIN GALL, ROSS GREIG, LOUISE NICOL, RONNIE PROCTOR (MBE), MARTIN SHEPHERD, LOIS SPEED and DEREK WANN.

Councillor FOTHERINGHAM, Convener, in the Chair.

Prior to the commencement of business the Convener indicated that a Request to Speak had been received from Mrs Troughton in relation to Agenda Item 5. The Committee agreed to hear the request to speak prior to Agenda Item 5.

### **1. APOLOGIES/SUBSTITUTES**

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Councillor Beattie with Councillor Braes substituting.

### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/STATEMENTS OF TRANSPARENCY**

Councillor Gall made a statement of transparency in relation to item 4, in that he knew the petitioner as a neighbouring farmer but had not had any discussions or participation in relation to the petition.

### **3. MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minute of meeting of this Committee of 22 October 2024 was submitted and approved as a correct record subject to the following amendment within the minute as detailed:-

#### **Item 5**

That the words "Angus Council" be removed from the last sentence and replaced with the words "the Communities Committee".

### **4. PETITION – SPEED REDUCTION AND UPGRADE TO BUS STOP, BALWYLLO FARM COTTAGES**

There was submitted Report No 356/24 by the Director of Legal, Governance and Change, advising members of an Electronic Petition which had been received in connection with a request to reduce the speed limited from 60mph to 30mph on the Balwyllo Farm Cottages Road and the bus stop on this road also be upgraded.

Following questions the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to refer the matter to the Communities Committee; and
- (ii) to request a fuller Report with potential options of traffic calming measures within the Report from the Director of Infrastructure and Environment.

### **REQUEST TO SPEAK**

At this stage, Mrs Troughton, the petitioner, addressed the meeting and provided background information as to the reasons for the petition being submitted, together with information from an independent and impartial Ecological Report which supported the petition.

Following a number of questions from members, the Convener thanked Mrs Troughton for her presentation at which point she withdrew to the public benches.

**5. PETITION – PRESERVATION OF LOCHTY WOODLAND**

There was submitted Report No 357/24 by the Director of Legal, Governance and Change, advising members of a petition which had been received in connection with the preservation of Lochty Woodland. A copy of the petition documentation was attached as Appendix 1 to the Report.

The Committee agreed to note receipt of the petition and took no further action.

**6. SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE - QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 1 JULY TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2024**

With reference to Article 4 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 27 August 2024, there was submitted Report No 358/24 by the Local Senior Officer, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service relating to quarter two, 1 July 2024 to 30 September 2024 on the performance and activities in support of the priorities in the Local Fire and Rescue Plan for Angus 2020 and the wider community planning priorities.

Attached as Appendix 1 to the Report was a detailed breakdown and analysis of all data collected during the reporting period. Headline indicators within the Report provided Members with an overview of the performance summary for the reporting year. The Report also provided an update with regards to Community Safety engagement events and partnership working and highlighted any notable incidents and events.

The Area Commander provided a brief overview of the Report and was heard in relation to the key performance highlights updating key performance figures for performance management targets and the Community Safety Engagement Programmes.

The Area Commander, Local Senior Officer informed the Committee this would be Group Commander Mark Lowe's last meeting as he would be retiring later in the month, noting all the work and commitment over the years Mark had provided.

A number of actions would be taken forward following discussions with regards to continuation of support for the Community Planning Partnership, the provision of further information in relation to the performance of the new appliance at Kirriemuir and response times and how these compare at a national level.

Following questions and comments, the Committee agreed to note the performance of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service as outlined in the quarterly monitoring Report for the period 1 July 2024 to 30 September 2024.

**7. POLICE SCOTLAND - ANGUS LOCAL POLICING AREA QUARTERLY REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 1 JULY 2024 – 30 SEPTEMBER 2024**

With reference to Article 5 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 27 August 2024, there was submitted Report No 359/24 by the Chief Superintendent, Police Scotland which updated the Committee on the performance results for the period 1 July 2024 to 30 September 2024.

Superintendent Adam Smith – Operations introduced himself to members and indicated that he would be attending meetings going forward. Thereafter members were given an overview of the Report which outlined the performance of Police Scotland and information in relation to some of the work which had taken place within the Angus Local Policing Area. The data provided within the Report was for information purposes to allow members to conduct their scrutiny responsibilities under the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012.

A number of actions would be taken forward following discussions with regards to refreshing the 'Ask Angela' campaign within the hospitality sector throughout Angus and wildlife crime which would be incorporated into future reports under its own section.

Following questions and comments the Committee agreed to note the Angus Local Policing Area Quarterly Report for the period 1 July 2024 to 30 September 2024.

*At this point, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and Police Scotland representatives left the meeting.*

## **8. ANGUS ALIVE ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT**

With reference to Article 5 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 23 January 2024, there was submitted Report No 360/24 by the Director of Legal, Governance and Change presenting the ANGUSalve Annual Performance Report for 2023/24.

The Report demonstrated how ANGUSalve had performed against the key performance indicators identified and outlined within ANGUSalve's Business Plan. The Report provided detailed information with regards to ANGUSalve's key achievements and developments during 2023/24 and included Information Governance Indicators for Key Performance Indicators, Customer Feedback, Complaints, Comments & Compliments, Workforce, Marketing and Communication.

Ian Stevens, acting Chief Executive provided detailed responses to members questions and comments and reassured members that the information presented encompassed the previous year's performance only and that future information within the Report would provide a more detailed breakdown of information to members.

The Committee agreed to note the ANGUSalve Annual Performance Report for 2023/24 as outlined in Appendix 1 to the Report.

## **9. INTERNAL AUDIT ACTIVITY UPDATE**

With reference to Article 8 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 27 August 2024, there was submitted Report No 361/24 by the Service Leader – Internal Audit providing assurance through an update on Internal Audit matters including main findings from reports issued since the date of the last Scrutiny and Audit Committee; progress with implementation of agreed Internal Audit and Counter Fraud actions.

Section 7 of the Report provided a summary of conclusions and assurances from audit work completed with regards to Tayside Contracts – Invoicing, Processing and Monitoring – Cleaning Facilities and Council Offices, Tayside Contracts – Invoicing, Processing and Monitoring – Schools, Council Tax Refunds – review of process and controls, Continuous Auditing – Payroll July – September 2024 and Continuous Auditing – Creditors Duplicate Payments July – September 2024 with a fuller overview provided within Appendix 1 of the Report.

Following questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the update on progress with the planned Internal Audit work detailed within Appendix 1 of the Report;
- (ii) to note management's progress in implementing Internal Audit and Counter Fraud Recommendations as detailed within Appendix 1 of the Report; and
- (iii) to note the position regarding the External Quality Assessment for Internal Audit detailed within Section 5 of the Report.

## **10. CORPORATE COUNTER FRAUD MID YEAR REVIEW**

With reference to Article 7 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 13 June 2024, there was submitted Report No 362/24 by the Service Leader - Internal Audit, providing a summary of the work undertaken by the Corporate Fraud Team (CFT) during the six months up to 30 September 2024.

The Service Leader – Internal Audit provided an update and highlighted the key areas of the Report with regards to Team resource within CFT, Fraud Risks, Employee and Corporate Fraud, Council Tax data matching, National Fraud Initiative, Tenancy Fraud, Fraud Awareness – Annual Governance eLearning, Serious Organised Crime and Anti-Tax Evasion. She also indicated that the Counter Fraud Team planned to progress an exercise in targeting school placement fraud.

The Committee agreed to note the contents of the Report.

**11. COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS REPORT – QUARTER 1 - 1 APRIL – 30 JUNE 2024  
QUARTER 2 – 1 JULY – 30 SEPTEMBER 2024**

With reference to Article 10 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 7 March 2024, there was submitted Report No 363/24 by the Director of Legal, Governance and Change, highlighting the complaints and compliments received in quarter one from 1 April to 30 June 2024 and quarter two from 1 July to 30 September 2024.

The Report provided a summary of complaints and compliments received by Directorates and outlined the four key Performance Indicators that the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman used to monitor practice and identify trends. A breakdown per service area was provided for Quarter 1 within Appendix 1 of the Report and for Quarter 2 within Appendix 2 of the Report.

Section 6 of the Report provided information with regards to Child Friendly Complaints which ensured that children's rights were central to policy and decision-making, and their needs met by public service complaints procedure in Scotland.

Following questions and comments, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the complaint statistics for the period 1 April to 30 June 2024 and 1 July to 30 September 2024;
- (ii) to note the sample of compliments received for the period 1 April to 30 June 2024 and 1 July to 30 September 2024; and
- (iii) to note the complaints received by each of the Council's Directorates as outlined in Appendices 1 and 2 of the Report.

**12. ANNUAL COMPLAINTS PERFORMANCE REPORT 2023-24**

With reference to Article 10 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 29 August 2023, there was submitted Report No 364/24 by the Director of Legal, Governance and Change providing an annual overview of complaints for members as required by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO).

The Report indicated that the SPSO was the responsible body for complaints, and also set and monitored complaints handling standards for the public sector in Scotland. The model Complaints Handling Procedure defined how the SPSO expected the public service sector to handle complaints quickly and simply, with local and early resolution by empowered and well-trained staff.

In 2023/24, Angus Council had received a total of 1,452 complaints. The SPSO had a variety of indicators as a basis for monitoring complaints handling performance and these were outlined in Section 6 of the Report. Appendix 1 of the Report provided members with a detailed overview of figures with regards to the different stages of complaints and outcomes.

Following questions and comments, the Chief Executive thanked members for their constructive feedback with regards to lessons learned and assured members this would be incorporated into future Reports.

Thereafter, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the Report.