

MINUTE of HYBRID MEETING of the **SCRUTINY AND AUDIT COMMITTEE** held in the Town and County Hall, Forfar on Thursday 23 January 2025 at 2.00pm.

Present: Councillors CRAIG FOTHERINGHAM, GAVIN NICOL, LINDA CLARK, JULIE BELL, SERENA COWDY, LYNNE DEVINE, TOMMY STEWART, ROSS GREIG, LOUISE NICOL, RONNIE PROCTOR MBE, MARTIN SHEPHERD, LOIS SPEED AND DEREK WANN.

Councillor FOTHERINGHAM, Convener, in the Chair.

1. **APOLOGIES/SUBSTITUTES**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors Chris Beattie and Iain Gall with Councillors Linda Clark and Tommy Stewart substituting, respectively.

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

There were no declarations of interest or statements of transparency made.

3. **MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minute of meeting of this Committee of 3 December 2024 was approved as a correct record and signed by the Convener.

4. **TAYSIDE CONTRACTS ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2023/24**

With reference to Article 6 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 23 January 2024, there was submitted Report No 16/25 by the Director of Infrastructure and Environment presenting the Tayside Contracts Annual Performance Report for 2023/24.

Appendix 1 to the Report detailed the Tayside Contracts Annual Performance Report and highlighted some of the key achievements and developments in 2023/24. The Report provided members with an overview of Tayside Contracts '5C's' and highlighted information within each of these areas.

Mr Keith McNamara, Managing Director, Mr Doug McKay, Head of Operations and Ms Diane Kidd, Strategic Lead – Finance & Governance, all Tayside Contracts, provided an overview of the key highlights, recent challenges and priorities.

Thereafter the representatives responded to questions and comments from members, particularly with regards to street and Christmas lighting, with detailed explanations and lessons learned. Concerns raised had been noted with a commitment being made to investigate these matters further and provide members with proposals for these points and concerns.

Having heard a number of positive comments from members with regards to improvements that had been made over the year, both the Convener and Councillor Nicol wished Mr McNamara the best in his retirement and thanked him for all his work over the years.

Thereafter, the Committee agreed to note the Tayside Contracts Annual Performance Report for 2023/24, included in Appendix 1.

At this point in the meeting Tayside Contract representatives left the meeting.

5. **CORPORATE GOVERNANCE – ACTION PLAN UPDATES**

With reference to Article 8 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 24 September 2024, there was submitted Report No 17/25 by the Director of Finance presenting an update in relation to the Action Plan included in the 2023/24 Annual Governance Statement, which also included an update in relation to the Action Plan from the 2023/24 Scrutiny and Audit Committee Annual Report to Council along with an update on the Best Value Action Plan.

The Service Leader – Governance, Change and Strategy provided members with an overview of the Report, highlighting that arrangements had been made for the Scrutiny and Audit Committee to have a Self-Assessment Session on 25 March 2025 and a Committee Training session on 30 January 2025 which would focus on internal audit, counter fraud and values of good governance.

Appendix 1 to the Report provided members with an overview of the Annual Governance Statement Action Plan noting there was 45% completion with regards to Risk Management Improvements as a result of resource issues. There had been a review of the plan with new timescales and dates identified.

Following questions and comments, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the update to the 2023/24 Annual Governance Statement Action Plan included in Appendix 1 of the Report;
- (ii) to note the update to the 2023/24 Scrutiny and Audit Committee Annual Report Action Plan to Council included in Appendix 2 of the Report;
- (iii) to note the update to Best Value Action Plans included in Appendices 3 and 4 of the Report;
- (iv) to approve the extension to the completion date of one action as set out within Section 4.2 of the Report; and
- (v) to note the arrangements for the Committee's 2024/25 self-assessment session which would take place on 25 March 2025 via Microsoft Teams and agreed the format of the meeting referred to within Section 7.1 of the Report.

6. INTERNAL AUDIT ACTIVITY UPDATE

With reference to Article 9 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 8 December 2024, there was submitted Report No 18/25 by Service Leader – Internal Audit providing assurance to members through an update on Internal Audit matters including main findings from reports issued since the date of the last Scrutiny and Audit Committee, and progress with implementation on agreed internal Audit and Counter Fraud Actions.

The Service Leader – Internal Audit provided members with a detailed overview of the Report including Appendix 1 which detailed 5 Audit Reports for:- Tayside Contracts – Invoice & Processing & Monitoring (2023-24) – Fleet Services which had a Substantial Level of Assurance, Programme of Random Cash Counts – Children, Families & Justice which had a Comprehensive Level of Assurance, Supplier Bank Details – Process for Charges which had a Substantial Level of Assurance, Tayside Contracts – Invoice & Processing & Monitoring (2023/24) – Roads Maintenance & Winter Management which had a Comprehensive Level of Assurance.

The Head of Cyber Services, Technology Risk, Azets, provided an overview of the final Report for IT User Access Administration Integra (2023/24) which had a Substantial Level of Assurance.

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; and
- (ii) to note management's progress in implementing Internal Audit and Counter Fraud recommendations detailed within Appendix 1 of the Report.