

Minutes

Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee

10.00am, Tuesday 8 June 2021

Present

Councillors Mowat (Convener), Arthur, Bird, Jim Campbell, Mary Campbell (substituting for Councillor Rae), Child, Dixon, Doggart, Staniforth, Work and Louise Young (substituting for Councillor Gloyer).

1. Minutes

Decision

To approve the minute of the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee 4 May 2021 as a correct record.

2. Outstanding Actions

Details were provided on the outstanding actions arising from decisions taken by the Committee.

Decision

1) To agree to close the following actions:

Action 8 (2) – Internal Audit Overdue Findings and Key Performance Indicators as at 10 February 2021

Action 11 (1&2) – Quarterly Status Update – Digital Services

Action 12 (3) – Change Portfolio

2) To otherwise note the outstanding actions.

(Reference – Outstanding Actions 8 June 2021, submitted.)

3. Work Programme

Decision

- 1) To note the Work Programme.
- 2) To note that Councillor Staniforth would submit an amendment to the Policy and Sustainability Committee of 10 June to request the Council Fire Safety Policy 2021-24 report be referred to the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee.

(Reference – Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee Work Programme 8 June 2021, submitted.)

4. Draft Annual Governance Statement

The draft Annual Governance Statement was presented to committee for scrutiny before it was to be finalised and signed by the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council.

Decision

- 1) To note the draft Annual Governance Statement prior to its signing and incorporation into the Council's unaudited financial statements and note that it would be presented to Council for approval.
- 2) To authorise the Chief Executive to make any minor changes to the statement considered necessary prior to submission of the financial statements for audit.
- 3) To agree to include details noting the EIJB's finances and how Council governance interacts with it and to be explicit within the report about how the Council intended to review this.
- 4) To agree that education would be made more explicit in the Life Chances section of the Governance Statement at section 1.25.5.
- 5) To make explicit the challenges experienced because of the diversion of officers to other priority projects and recognise that Community interaction and engagement with Officers had been impacted during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 6) To agree to include target dates for actions in the Governance Statement.
- 7) To agree that consideration would be given to open access to information and what could be more publicly available for Elected Members and members of the public to search.
- 8) To note that options for political decision making were being prepared for the Governance Statement and that work was ongoing on Officer governance as a result of these options.
- 9) To note that the operational decision making would be reflected within the Governance Statement and reported to Policy and Sustainability committee.

- 10) To explicitly state the plan for communication with local communities within the Governance Statement, including what would be retained for any future pollical governance arrangements.

(Reference – report by the Chief Executive, submitted.)

5. Internal Audit: Overdue Findings and Key Performance Indicators as at 27 April 2021

Committee considered a report on Internal Audit Overdue Findings and Key Performance Indicators as at 27 April 2021, which provided an overview of the status of the overdue Internal Audit (IA) findings as at 27 April 2021. A total of 100 open IA findings remained to be addressed across the Council as at 27 April 2021. This excluded open and overdue Internal Audit findings for the Edinburgh Integration Joint Board and the Lothian Pension Fund.

Decision

- 1) To note the status of the overdue Internal Audit (IA) findings as at 27 April 2021.
- 2) To refer the report to the relevant Council Executive committees and the Edinburgh Integration Joint Board Audit and Assurance Committee for information in relation to the current Health and Social Care Partnership position.
- 3) To agree to provide a briefing note on progress of actions 28 and 29 - the Edinburgh Alcohol and Drug Partnership (EADP) – Contract Management to Members of the Governance Risk and best Value Committee.

(References – Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee, 23 March 2021 (item 5); report by the Chief Internal Auditor, submitted.)

6. Internal Audit Update Report: 1 February to 30 April 2021

Details were provided on the progress of the delivery of Internal Audit key priorities and ongoing areas of focus. Retrospective approval was also sought for the three urgent changes to the 2020/21 Internal Audit (IA) annual plan in line with the agreed process for approving changes to the Internal Audit annual plan.

Decision

- 1) To retrospectively approve the three urgent changes to the 2020/21 Internal Audit (IA) annual plan in line with the agreed process for approving changes to the Internal Audit annual plan.
- 2) To note the outcomes of completed 2020/21 audits.
- 3) To note progress with delivery of the 2020/21 Internal Audit plan.

- 4) To note progress with delivery of the 2021/22 IA plan.
- 5) To note extended delivery timeframes for completion of seven audits and their potential impact on the 2020/21 IA annual opinion.
- 6) To note progress with delivery of IA key priorities and ongoing areas of focus.
- 7) To note that the Convener would contact Committee Members regarding a workshop for Members to consider the draft report and response to the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee effectiveness statement.

(References – Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee, 23 March 2021 (item 7); report by the Chief Internal Auditor, submitted.)

7. Deep Dive into 30 Internal Audit Findings More Than One Year Old as at 30 April 2021

Following a review of the quarterly Internal Audit (IA) Overdue Findings report in March 2021, Committee agreed that details of the 30 outstanding IA actions that were more than one year old (as at 10 February 2021) would return to Committee for further scrutiny. There had been some progress towards closure of the 30 open IA findings that were more than one year overdue as at the 10 February 2021 position reported to the Committee in March 2021, with 7 findings closed, and a balance of 23 still requiring to be addressed. Of the remaining 23 findings still to be addressed, 5 had been proposed for closure by management and were currently being reviewed by IA

Decision

- 1) To note the current status of the Internal Audit (IA) overdue findings reported to the March Committee that were more than one year old as at 10 February 2021.
- 2) To note the actions proposed to close these findings.

(References – Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee, 23 March 2021 (item 5); report by the Chief Executive, submitted.)

8. Welfare Reform Annual Report

An update was provided on the Council's ongoing welfare reform activities, which included the implementation of Universal Credit.

Decision

- 1) To note the ongoing work to support Universal Credit (UC) and Welfare Reform, in Edinburgh.
- 2) To note the current spend projections for Discretionary Housing Payments, Council Tax Reduction Scheme and the Scottish Welfare Fund.

- 3) To record Committee's thanks to the Customer Manager for Transactions, and her team.

(References – Policy and Sustainability Committee, 23 February 2021 (item 20); report by the Executive Director of Resources, submitted.)

9. Corporate Leadership Team Risk Register as at 30 April 2021

An update was provided on the Council's top risks and the key controls in place to mitigate them as at 30 April 2021. The report presented the Council's current strategic risk profile and highlighted those risks where further action was required (where realistic and possible) to ensure that they were brought within approved strategic risk appetite levels.

Decision

- 1) To note the Council's current strategic risk profile.
- 2) To note that five strategic risks are currently outwith agreed risk appetite ranges.
- 3) To note that the current strategic risk profile may increase in the event of further individual or concurrent resilience events in the current Covid-19 operating environment.
- 4) To note the proposed phased approach to implementation of the Council's refreshed operational risk management framework.

(Reference - report by the Chief Executive, submitted.)

10. Capital City Partnership: Progress Update - referral from the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee

The Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee had referred an update report on the Capital City Partnership to the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee for information. The report provided an update on the progress made against the objectives and targets detailed within the Service Level Agreement (SLA) between the Council and Capital City Partnership (CCP).

Decision

To note the report.

(References – Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee, 3 June 2021, referral from the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee, submitted.)

11. Whistleblowing update

The Committee considered a high-level overview of the operation of the Council's whistleblowing hotline for the period 1 January to 31 March 2021

Decision

To note the report by the Chief Executive.

(References – report by the Chief Executive, submitted.)

12. Whistleblowing Monitoring Report

The Committee, in terms of Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, were requested to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business for the reason that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1, 12 and 15 of Part 1 of Schedule 7(A) of the Act.

An overview of the disclosures received, and investigation outcome reports completed during the period 1 January to 31 March 2021 was provided.

Decision

- 1) To note the report by the Chief Executive.
- 2) To agree that consideration would be given to adding further details to the Outcome and follow-up actions column on future iterations of the report to include expected timeframes for closure.

(Reference – report by the Chief Executive, submitted.)